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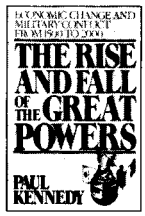

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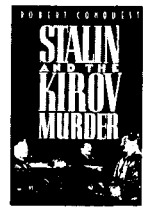

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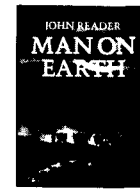

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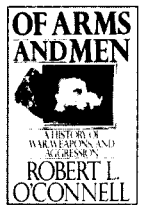

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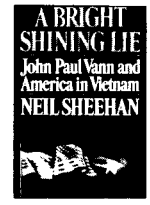

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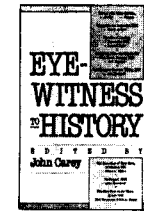

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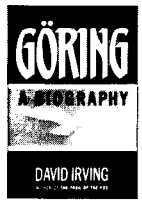

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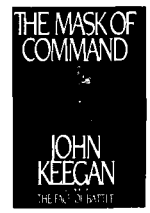

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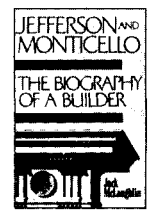

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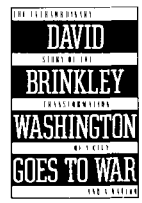

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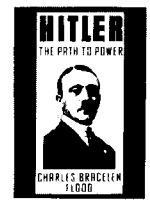

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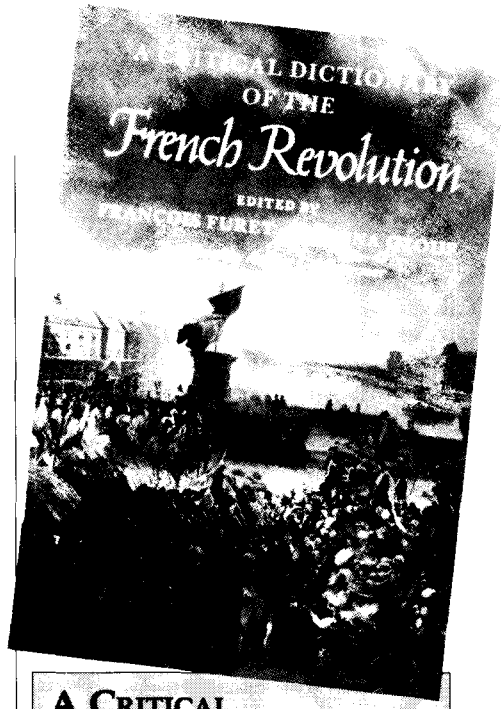

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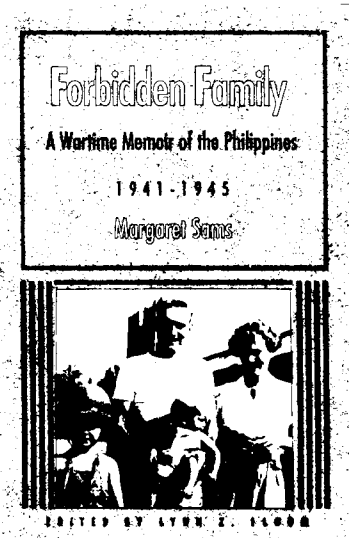

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A Few Kind Words for Envy

ARISTIDES

Well, though many an arraigned mortal has in hopes of mitigated penalty pleaded guilty to horrible actions, did ever anybody seriously confess to envy? Something there is in it universally felt to be more shameful than even felonious crime.

—Herman Melville

You may as well know the worst about me, Doctor: I have not coveted my neighbor's wife in years, and I certainly do not want his Rolls-Royce, his duplex, or his shiny new fax machine. The young walk by, with their lithe limbs and clear minds, the years and years stretching out leisurely before them, and I feel no longing to change places with them. Neither do I desire to be a United States senator, a university president, the benevolent dictator of a small, mineral-rich country nestled in a lush setting in a lovely mild climate. I have no longing to enjoy the emoluments of the editor of the *New York Times*, the president of L'Académie Française, or Magic Johnson. Please do not understand me too quickly here, Doctor. I am not, I assure you, expressing complacency, smug (isn't *smug* the inevitable adjective here?) self-satisfaction with my own lot in life. No, something deeper, more mysterious, is going on. I am, not to put too fine a point on it, losing my capacity for envy, and I wonder, Doc, what can it mean?

I suppose none of this would worry me if, for so many years, I hadn't envied so widely, so thoroughly, so energetically. Many were the mornings I woke envying and many the nights I retired to envy, with time off for several little breaks for envy during the day. I read somewhere that one of the few benefits of growing older is that, in one's psychic economy, envy is replaced by admiration. I am not sure what I currently do with the time I once lavished upon envy, but I am quite sure that I do not pay it out in admiration. Can it be, too, that, now that I envy less, I shall grow fatter, for Horace, in the *Epistles*, remarks that "those who envy others grow thin despite vast wealth" (of envy, he adds, "Sicilian tyrants could never have contrived a better torture"). Is my loss of envy, then, likely to result in substantial weight gain? Am I, by envying insufficiently, endangering my health, Doc?

To begin my life not quite with the beginning of my life, the first thing I can remember envying was the parents of two boys I grew up with named Sammy and Billy Cowling. I loved my parents a very great deal, you understand, but on paper they just didn't stack up next to the Cowlings' parents. For openers, their father, Sam Cowling, Sr., was on the radio; he was the comedian on a then immensely popular radio show called "The Breakfast Club," where, among other things, he did a bit entitled Fiction and Fact from Sam's Almanac. Even at five years old, I knew that being on the radio was pretty hot stuff. He also happened to be a friendly man, kindly and thoughtful to children, and a good athlete. Sam Cowling, Sr., owned baseball spikes. I knew of no other father but the Cowlings' who owned spikes. Mrs. Cowling was feminine, beautifully so, and named (are you quite ready for this?) Dale, which was the name of Roy Rogers's wife. The Cowlings seemed so wondrous to me as a child that, in those days, I shouldn't have been surprised to learn that they kept a flowing-maned palomino in the dining room of their two-bedroom apartment. I don't want anyone to think that I envied the

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Cowling kids their parents so much that I would have traded my own for them. I would never finally have done that, but before deciding not to do it, I believe I would have had to give it considerable thought.

The second thing I remember envying was Catholics. For a time, from roughly age four to seven, I thought the United States was a Catholic country. This was owing partly to there being a preponderance of Catholic families on our block and partly to the movies of those years, a large number of which seemed to feature Bing Crosby, Barry Fitzgerald, Spencer Tracy, and Pat O'Brien playing priests. I envied the rigmarole of the Catholic church, at least as it came across to me in the movies and in the bits and pieces of it I was able to pick up from families such as the Cowlings. Nothing theological or even religious about this, for I was in fact rather like Valéry, who felt that the Protestants had made a big mistake and should have gotten rid of God and kept the pope. I liked the lighting of candles, the confessional box, the prohibition against meat on Fridays, the clothes of priests and the extraordinary get-ups of nuns. "May I offer you my seat, Sister?" I used to say whenever the opportunity presented itself on Chicago streetcars or el trains. "Excuse me, Father, but would you care to have my seat?" I would announce with just a slight hint of an Irish brogue. Any fisher of souls who knew his business could have had me in the net in those days in fewer than thirty seconds.

I keenly envied friends who had hair of a kind that could be combed to resemble the hairdos of Gary Cooper, Cary Grant, Clark Gable, John Wayne, Errol Flynn, and other movie stars of the day. My own hair was thick, curly, thoroughly disobedient. It resisted pompadours, widow's peaks, and wouldn't even tolerate a simple part. "My goodness," I remember my mother once saying to me, "that part in your hair looks like Milwaukee Avenue," a reference to a lengthy diagonal street in Chicago that every so often juts sharply to the left or right or takes a surprising turn. I longed for precisely the kind of hair I didn't have—for lank hair that bopped up and down rhythmically when I ran and that I would frequently have to brush back out of my eyes with my hand. When crew cuts became the haircut of choice for midwestern boys between twelve and eighteen, my hair wouldn't allow a serious flat-top crew cut either. All my attempts to obtain a crew cut ended in my coming away with an extremely short haircut that, mocking the power of prayer and pomade, would not stand up. Wishing to look like a brutish Big Ten athlete, I merely looked, as I am told an immigrant woman in Princeton once put it, like "a nice boy clean and cut from the Ivory League."

None of this, I realize, quite sounds like the envy that has had such a poor historical press. I refer to the envy that Balzac, in *Lost Illusions*, described as "an ignoble accumulation of disappointed hope, frustrated talents, failures, and wounded pretensions"; that Orwell called "a horrible thing," which "is unlike all other kinds of suffering in that there is no disguising it"; that the Austrian novelist Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach rated beneath hatred, noting that "hatred is a fertile, envy a sterile vice"; and that Gore Vidal, a writer scarcely known for specializing in the goodness of humankind, cites as "the only credible emotion, isn't it?" Pretty clearly the motive for Cain's slaying of Abel was envy. Melville's splendid "Billy Budd" shows the horror that envy acted upon can achieve. "The vilest affection," Francis Bacon called envy, "and the most depraved," and in cataloging by type those frequently obsessed by envy, he writes: "Deformed persons, and eunuches, and old men, and bastards, are envious." Not, as I say, a good historical press.

Envy is apparently more easily felt than defined. Semantically, the word provides a thicket out of which only a philologist in a pith helmet and carrying a magnifying glass is likely to emerge with his spirits intact. Envy and jealously, envy and emulation, envy and invidiousness, envy and ambition, envy and desire, the distinctions, the connections, the shades of meaning, the contextual nuances, all these things, if tracked down and carefully considered, could keep a fellow off the streets till well after the turn of the century. As there are some faces only a mother could love, so are there some books only a German scholar could write, and just such a book entitled *Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour* has been written by a Professor Helmut Schoeck, but it, on the matter of definition, plunges one back into the thicket. The standard dictionaries, I fear, are not very helpful on this troublesome word either. I have, therefore, decided to supply my own definition: Envy, I say, is desiring what someone else has—a desire

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usually heightened by the knowledge that one is unlikely to attain it. This definition nicely accommodates my feelings about Sam and Billy Cowling's parents, the Catholic church, and tractable hair.

My homemade definition leaves out the dark elements of spite, hostility, ill will, and begrudgment that most definitions of envy usually include. These elements cause the Parson, in *The Canterbury Tales*, to call envy "that foul sin . . . the worst sin there is"; these elements give envy its unenviable status as one of the seven deadly sins. Yet there is also a milder, even approbative sense of envy that is free from all malice, as when the Reverend Sydney Smith, writing to Francis Jeffrey, remarks: "I envy your sense, your style, and the good temper with which you attack prejudices that drive me almost to the limits of sanity." I don't think that Sydney Smith, who chose his words punctiliously, misused *envy* here and that he really meant *admire*—he not only admired these qualities in McIntosh but wished he had them himself.

Along the same line, I recall several years ago, awaiting a table in a restaurant, sitting in a bar in which a man was hired to play, on a small electric organ, such sappy songs as "I Left My Heart in San Francisco," "The Way We Were," and "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head." The unspoken consensus in the bar was that plainly this man loved his work too much, for he was banging away at his instrument with a fervor almost religious in intensity, making conversation just about impossible. Then, during a brief pause between numbers, a smallish, well-dressed man, a customer sitting only a few seats away from my own, walked over to him, handed him a hundred-dollar bill, and told him to take the rest of the night off. How I not only admired but envied that gesture, the rightness and not least the largeness of it! The fellow seemed pleased with the money, which was probably more than his regular night's wages; the room settled down into calm talk; and I felt a tinge of envy for what I had just witnessed, knowing that, had the notion even occurred to me, I probably would have offered the man a mere twenty bucks to knock off for an hour or so.

Not that I haven't felt my share of rich purple envy, the kind mixed with lots of malice and generally grudging feeling. But I don't recall feeling much envy of this kind when young. Such envy as I did feel was instead rather impersonal. I envied the freedom and wider experience of kids older than I; I envied boys who had the knack of winning the affection of beautiful girls; finally I envied those who had the unfailing ability to make themselves enviable. Being born to parents of middling wealth and being oneself of middling talent is surely to know envy more comprehensively than otherwise, for it permits envy of those both above and beneath you. From my earliest adolescence, I recognized that there were families who lived better than mine—in larger houses, with more expensive cars, and more capacious habits generally—and felt them, somehow, luckier than I. But I also felt envy for those born without my advantages, and the constraints that went along with them, and I remember reading, in high school, a series of novels with slum settings—*A Stone for Danny Fisher*, *The Amboy Dukes*, *The Hoods*—that made me feel that people who grew up in slums grew up more interestingly, sexier, luckier than I. Envy perhaps begins with the attribution of luck to the next fellow, for it seems that people with a real flair for envy—of whom I am clearly one—almost always see the next fellow as, somehow, luckier than themselves.

Very little about my youthful envy was subtle, and this, I believe, was owing to my having grown up in a family in which snobbery was almost non-existent. Delicate, and even rather bulky, calibrations in status were of no concern to my parents, who did not bother to make many social distinctions beyond noting that some people were pleasant and some nasty, some rich and some poor, some gentile and some Jewish. Not at our dinner table were you likely to hear discussions about the fine distinctions between Williams and Amherst colleges, a Brooks Brothers and a J. Press suit, the Budapest and the Julliard string quartets. The Midwest was my milieu, and middle western the outer limits of my view. In both my own high-school graduating class and in the class that preceded mine, only two students went to Ivy League schools—both, as it happened, to Harvard—and neither was a boy it would have occurred to me to envy. For envy to take on interesting twists, shadings, and dark refinements, a little knowledge—always, as the old maxim has it, a dangerous thing—is required.

Three writers who did, I think, know a good deal about envy, young and at first hand, were

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F. Scott Fitzgerald, John O'Hara, and the journalist George Frazier. Fitzgerald, who lived in the poorest house on a very good block in St. Paul, Minnesota, learned about envy as a boy and had this knowledge honed as a young man who ran the gauntlet of snobbery at Princeton. The great event of John O'Hara's life turned out to be a non-event, his not going to Yale, which, wise though O'Hara was in so many other ways, he appears never to have gotten over. George Frazier, who came from the Irish neighborhood in Boston known as Southie, went to Harvard but with the certainty that, as an Irishman in the early 1930s, he could never hope to make the best clubs or quite cut it with students who came from the best families and prep schools. Frazier was an admirer of the fiction of Fitzgerald and O'Hara, and all three men were immensely, intensely interested not only in style but in stylishness. Frazier even wrote a column in *Esquire* under the rubric "Style," which tended to be about people who had it and people who didn't. The three men also shared Irishness, at a time in our history when being Irish did not carry the comfortable, vaguely comical connotations it does today. I think they never got over the feeling of being boys and young men with their noses pressed to the glass, outsiders looking enviously in. Too keen an interest in style, I have come to suspect, betrays an early life of longing and envy.

The best-known method for combating envy is to arrange to acquire everything you want in life. Unfortunately, it often takes the better part of a lifetime to decide what, precisely, it is that you do want, which leaves damnably little time to acquire it. "I suppose you must be well," wrote Virgil Thomson to Paul Bowles, "you had everything there was when you were young; nothing left to have, I suppose." An odd error, in so worldly-wise a man as Virgil Thomson, to think that wanting ever ceases. So long as avarice, lust, the appetite for glory, and snobbery continue to play as main attractions in the human heart, there is unlikely to be a serious shortage of wanting.

The sorting out of one's wants, especially when one is young, can be nearly a full-time job. I believe it was so for me, for, as I look back upon my young manhood, there was scarcely anything I didn't want and hence didn't vaguely find myself resenting in those who had it. I had only to see a beautiful woman with another man for my mind to jump to the question—the injustice, really—of why she was not instead with me. I would drive by suburban estates, walk past plush Park Avenue apartment buildings, and readily imagine myself happily ensconced therein. A Rolls-Royce convertible would tool by and, the resentment string in my heart plucking discordantly, I would not wish its owner well. (Not long ago, driving in heavy traffic in a flashy raspberry-colored Cadillac Seville, I suggested to the car's owner, an intelligent woman who takes the world as it is, that she put out her arm to request a break in the traffic so that she could get into the next lane. "I'm afraid," she said, "that in a car like this people tend not to give you many breaks.") When I was young all I really wanted from the world was money, power, and fame—and, naturally, the little perks that went along with them.

The problem, I have long since concluded, is that I spread my desire too thin. I merely wanted everything—but nothing, evidently, greatly enough. I also hit a lengthy detour in my desirousness—I am, apparently, still on it—when I developed this strange passion for acquiring the knack of writing interesting sentences. Although this passion freed me from the comprehensive generality of my desires, it concentrated my envy. For the first time, my envy lost its character of general longing and took a turn toward the particular, where envy usually gets unpleasant. What I now envied, with some intensity, was people of my own generation—I was then in my early twenties—who wrote better than I. Since I did not write all that well, my envy was given a wide berth and a fine chance for regular workouts. Around this time I can recall reading, in a biographical note, that a contributor to *Poetry*, a magazine I much admired, was born in 1940, which was three years later than I, a fact that registered like a rabbit punch to the kidneys. I didn't write poetry, you understand; nevertheless it seemed to me offensive for this young woman, three years my junior, to publish in a place in which I should have loved to publish had I written poetry. If this sounds a little crazy to you, not to worry; it only sounds crazy because it is.

The first of my contemporaries of whom I felt envious was a fellow undergraduate at the University of Chicago who had published a short story at the unconscionable age of sixteen. He had published it, moreover, not in some vulgar popular rag such as the *Saturday Evening Post* or *Redbook*, but in a then im-

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mitigably highbrow journal called *New World Writing*, where it appeared alongside work by the likes of Federico García Lorca and Wallace Stevens. I, who dreamed of publication, of seeing my name not in lights but in very small type (sans serifs), and who knew that publication, with luck, was still several years off, looked upon this boy and felt the sting of the world's terrible injustice. I also felt toward him a simple desire to exchange lives. I do not say that I despised him—he was very amiable, without the least air of superiority—but I should have preferred he matriculate elsewhere, so that his presence not remind me of my own drearily slow progress. Strangely, so far as I know, he never published another thing. Did some personal tragedy intervene, I wonder, or was his petering out owing to his own lack of sufficient envy?

Writers and musicians tend to be rivalrous, which means, inevitably, envious and jealous. (Jealousy, Professor Schoeck holds, "remains the passionate endeavor to keep something that is one's own by right," whereas envy has to do with wanting something belonging to another.) Painters, for some reason, seem less envious of one another, or at least I, with limited knowledge, can think of more genuinely comradely behavior among painters than among musicians and writers. (All exceptions granted: John Morley, for example, said that Matthew Arnold "had not a spark of envy or jealousy.") Envy figures to be deepest at the top. Isaac Stern is famously generous to young musicians, but is he, I wonder, sound on the subject of Jascha Heifetz? At a dinner party in heaven, I think it probably a good idea not to invite, on the same evening, Shakespeare, Goethe, and Tolstoy; nor would I recommend seating Leonardo and Michelangelo next to each other. Having achieved great fame, having garnered all the world's great prizes, does not necessarily slake envy. Nor are scientists free from envy. "Don't call X this morning," a friend once advised of a scientific acquaintance of ours. "The Nobel Prize was announced, and since he didn't win it again this year, he's likely to be in a foul mood." The joke here is that, a few years earlier, X had already won it.

But then artists and scientists have no monopoly on envy; it is merely that their often monstrous egotism tends to display it in high comic relief. Academics are very good at envy, too, and it takes so little to get their envy into gear: the slightest advantage or advancement gained by a colleague will usually turn the trick. Modern corporations, sociologists and journalists have been claiming for years, are scarcely more than envy organized. Freud contended that all women, to lesser or greater degree, were envious, because of the absence in their own anatomy of a certain male appendage—as sweeping a generalization as our century has to offer. And as long as we're talking appendages, Melanie Klein, the Freudian psychoanalyst, maintained that envy is learned, literally, at the breast, and in a paper entitled "Envy and Gratitude" she rattles on at depressing length about "the primary envy of the mother's breast." As a member of a generation whose parents felt breast-feeding was bad form—we, so to speak, ordered out—I feel disqualified from commenting on the persuasiveness of Dr. Klein's argument. I suppose, as the saying is, you had to be there.

Such theories—and I, for one, do not envy anyone who subscribes to them—gain currency chiefly because envy appears to be so universal a phenomenon that an equally universal theory seems to be required to account for it. No known society, from simple tribes organized around a belief in magic to large industrial nations organized around a belief in communist equality, has ever been entirely free from envy, and in many societies—those that are fearful of the evil eye of envy, those that through competition encourage envy—it has been dominant. Envy has long been considered a theological problem, with its power of sowing discord, especially where it abuts its sister sin of pride, for even among saints it is possible to imagine one envying the other's greater spirituality. Spiritual envy is often the subject of the novels and stories of J. F. Powers. The great political (Churchill, de Gaulle), spiritual (Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr.), and scientific (Freud, Einstein) figures of our century were none of them without envy in their lives. The pope, I am prepared to believe, is without envy, but was he before he became pope? Mother Teresa of Calcutta is the only person alive today that I can think of who appears to be utterly free from envy. Doubtless there are others, but if they were to meet in a convention I don't think one would need to reserve all the rooms in the Helmsley Palace to accommodate them.

I hope no one thinks that, because I began this essay by saying I was running out of envy, I imagine myself approaching the spiritual

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trim of Mother Teresa. "I have never known life without desire," remarks the hero of Italo Svevo's *Confessions of Zeno*, and neither, I must report, have I. And where there is desire, be assured, nearby envy lurks. I thought, for example, that I had long ago made my peace with money and material possessions. The terms of the treaty, set by me, were entirely in my favor. I liked having money, respected money, had not the least doubt of the importance of money in human affairs. Yet I long ago decided that I would never knowingly truckle for money, or, if I could help it, expend great energy on projects whose sole result was pecuniary gain. Insofar as possible, I felt, everything I did should either amuse me or contribute to my intellectual progress—preferably both. My mind, in this scheme, would dwell in the clouds, my bottom never rest for long on the bottom line.

In exchange, I agreed to surrender all fantasies of real wealth: the country estate, the Paris apartment, the limousine, the staff of unobtrusive but absolutely reliable servants. Such fantasies ought to have been easily enough surrendered, for fairly early in life it became evident to me that I should never be rich. Part of my problem is less an antipathy than an inability to concentrate for long on money. It isn't that my mind is too fine to be violated by money matters, but instead that I haven't the attention span to learn the fundamentals of the stock, commodities, options, and other markets or even to learn how to get the best out of the smallish sums I am able to save. Part of the problem, too, is that I could never quite imagine myself rich, with all the world's objects within my grasp. You are rich, says Henry James in *Portrait of a Lady*, when you can meet the demands of your imagination. My imagination, that nag, would never allow surcease in its demands, so that even with billions I could not, by Jamesian prescription, qualify as rich anyhow.

Do I, I ask myself, envy the very wealthy their riches and what they have brought them? I like to think not, and yet I do find myself taking a perhaps uncommon delight in hearing stories about burglar alarm systems going off in homes with serious art collections and spoiling otherwise gracious meals. Why does my spirit jump a notch when I see a large Mercedes being towed ignominiously off to Rolfe's Auto Repair? Can it be that we have a case here of *Schadenfreude*, that little subdivision of envy that *Webster's* allows itself the rare luxury of going alliterative to define as "malicious merriment at someone else's misfortune"? La Rochefoucauld gives *Schadenfreude* a genuinely hideous twist when he turns it very personal and remarks that "we always find something which is not displeasing to us in the misfortunes of our best friends." That is not envy, though—it is merely pure human viciousness. But there is, I think, a national *Schadenfreude* that is excited by revelations about the ostensibly very fortunate—the rich, the beautiful, the immensely talented—living in great emotional squalor. Howard Hughes supplied the country with Schadenfreudic titillation that lasted for months when it came out that his having a fortune in the billions of dollars did not prevent his living, poor devil, at the emotional level of a rodent. On its dark side, a democracy enjoys few things more than the spectacle of the rich undone, the beautiful besmirched, the talented penalized. See any issue of the *National Enquirer*, *People*, or *Vanity Fair* for confirmation.

Whatever their other deprivations, academics, intellectuals, and artists find no shortage of occasions for *Schadenfreude* or straightforward envy. The promotion denied, the manuscript rejected, or the dead-on devastating review can put the ugly little curl into the sympathetic smile of the colleague one had thought, until now, civil enough and not displeased with your success. "The Book of My Enemy Has Been Remaindered" is the title of a poem by Clive James whose refrain lines run: "And I am pleased." "And I rejoice." "And I am glad." Attend the honest *Schadenfreude* note amusingly played by Mr. James exulting at the defeat of a book by a rival poet:

> What avail him now his awards and prizes,
> The praise expended upon his meticulous technique,
> His individual new voice?
> Knocked into the middle of the week
> His brainchild now consorts with the bad buys,
> The sinkers, clinkers, dogs and dregs,
> The Edsels of the world of movable type,
> The bummers that no amount of hype could shift,
> The unbudgeable turkeys.

In intellectual life, awards and prizes are no longer the efficient swizzle sticks for stirring

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envy that they once were. Pulitzers, Guggenheims, NEH's, NEA's, honorary degrees—too many of all of these have by now been given out, and to too many mediocre people, for them any longer to carry much prestige, and hence to excite much envy. One award, though, can still do the job—narrow the eyes, quicken the pulse, dry the palms, send a little black cloud across the heart—and this is a MacArthur Fellowship. "It isn't the principle," my father used to say when attempting to collect bad business debts, "it's the money." And so with "Big Macs," as they are known in the trade, it isn't the prestige—too many not very impressive MacArthur Fellows already walk the earth—it, too, is the money. To win a MacArthur Fellowship is to go on a five-year ride at as much as $75,000 a year, for a total score of nearly four hundred grand. Nowhere near the kind of money a switch-hitting second baseman can bring down, true, but still a nice piece of change.

My own carefully considered view of the MacArthur Fellowships was, I believe, similar to that held by most intellectuals, artists, scientists, performers, and inventors: sheer resentment for just about every nickel that did not go to me. I could understand the foundation's need to come across for a Navajo underwater architect or a woman weightlifter who is making a series of documentary films based on the Talmud; there are, after all, political reasons for such awards. But I failed entirely to understand the reasoning behind all the awards to literary men and women, none of whom, when you came right down to it (which I did rather quickly), seemed nearly so fit for a MacArthur as I. I won't go into my qualifications here, except to say that they seemed to me damn near perfect: my work was unusual and various; from the outside I must appear overworked; and, like 99 percent of my countrymen, I could use the dough. What was more, a MacArthur Fellowship was one of the few such awards I had any hope of winning, for I had long ago determined never to apply for a grant or prize. If people wished to give me these things, splendid, but I was raised to believe that you didn't ask strangers for money.

So I went along from year to year, happy enough in my mild resentment, gaily mocking each year's fresh crop of MacArthur Fellows, until it was revealed to me that I had myself been nominated for a MacArthur. Good friends even sent me thoughtfully inflated letters of recommendation they had been asked to send in on my behalf. The envy in my soul now had to make room for its first cousin, greed. I thought a goodly amount in an unconcentrated way about what I might do with the money such a fellowship would bring in. If I had long ago agreed to forego the large luxurious things, I had a decided taste for the small luxurious things: the German fountain pen, the Italian loafers, the dish of raspberries in mid-winter. With my MacArthur Fellowship, there would be more of these things, much more. And, while at it, I ought to acquire some really good luggage. Most of the money, I thought, I would pocket away in some high-yield bank account, perhaps with an eye, at the end of the fellowship's five years, to plunking it all down on a modest house on Fiesole overlooking the red roofs of the city of Florence. The Big Macs were announced, I knew, sometime in the summer, and so about June first I began opening my mailbox in anticipation of finding that envelope from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation informing me that I had won a fellowship and might now, baby, let the good times roll. I thought, too, with some glee, how discouraging my winning a MacArthur Fellowship would be to my enemies. Alas, no letter arrived; it was not to be; and now, with the printing of these last few paragraphs, it isn't ever likely to be.

Had I won a MacArthur Fellowship, of course, I should have stepped across from the shady to the sunny side of the street—from being an envier to being envied. Even without a MacArthur, I might, it occurs to me, already have crossed that street. In the eyes of many, I am among the world's lucky people. And so—I knock wood here, lest the evil eye fall upon me—do I generally think myself. I have all the essential things: work that amuses me, excellent health, freedom, the love of a good-hearted and intelligent woman. Ought not that be sufficient? It ought, except that, human nature being human nature—or is it instead my nature being my nature?—it hasn't been sufficient to diminish envy; or at least it hasn't been until recently.

Within the past few years, two acquaintances, roughly my contemporaries, have written books that have made them millions of dollars. Despite the fact that my most recent royalty check was for $2.49, I found that I did

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not feel the least wisp of envy for either of these fellows; nor do I now. Not long ago I went to dinner with a political columnist who appears regularly on television, and our meal was interrupted by a request for his autograph; on the way out of the restaurant he was twice stopped by strangers and congratulated for recent work. I thought this fascinating, but my envy gland, usually so sensitive, gave not a twitch. True, for my own writing, posterity and not prosperity is the name of my (slightly embarrassing to admit) desire; and rather than widespread fame, I prefer to have a good name among a select audience of the genuinely thoughtful. But none of this is a convincing reason not to have felt envious. What good is longing, after all, if you can't long for contradictory things: the pleasures that riches bring and a life of simplicity, fame and privacy both? If you are going to force envy to be consistent, you're likely to put it out of business.

Many people would, of course, prefer to see envy go permanently out of business. Arthur Rubinstein, in his memoirs, remarked that at bottom anti-Semitism was owed chiefly to envy, and that the anti-Semite's "real hatred is concentrated on the Jews who possess the highest standards of ethics, intelligence, and talents, on those who, whenever allowed to compete, become prominent in all possible fields like science, art, or economy." On the other side of the ledger, envy is a foe of drab leveling. L. P. Hartley has written an anti-utopian novel entitled *Facial Justice* in which equality is known as Good E and envy as Bad E; what makes envy Bad E is that it arouses people's passions for discrimination, degree, difference, all the things that give life variety and make it interesting. Without these differences, Hartley's novel argues, life is scarcely worth living.

Perhaps the problem lies in the word *envy* itself. There is a good envy, of the kind that encourages dreams and aspiration, and a bad envy, based on disappointment and hatred. Perhaps a new word is needed, one that falls between envy and admiration, to describe the positive qualities of the former and strip it of traditional pejorative meanings. But the language, as Flaubert remarked in a very different connection—he was trying to convince his mistress of his love for her by describing its intensity—the language, as Flaubert remarked, is inept.

Meanwhile, my own problem, I begin to realize, is that I am becoming more discriminating in my envy. What I am discriminating against is the world's larger, more obvious prizes: wealth, fame, power. Glittering though these prizes are, and as they once were to me, I now find them mainly glaring, and in my own life even a little beside the point. I still envy large things, among them genuine achievement, true religious faith, real erudition. I justify envy of these things on the ground that surely there is no point in envying things you can actually have and that it is only the unattainable that is worth a serious person's envy.

The only expensive item I continue to envy is a small, well-made house with a fine view of water and of a naturally elegant landscape. For the rest, I envy things on which a price tag cannot be put, many but not all of them fairly trivial. Permit me to list them. I envy anyone who can do a backward somersault in midair from a standing position. I envy men who have fought a war and survived it. I envy people who speak foreign languages easily. I envy performing artists who have the power to move and amuse audiences to the point where the audience wants the performance never to end. I envy people who can travel abroad with a single piece of carry-on luggage. I envy people who have good posture. Above all, I envy those few people who truly understand that life is a fragile bargain, rescindable at any time by the other party, and live their lives accordingly.

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Being Black and Feeling Blue

Black Hesitation on the Brink

SHELBY STEELE

IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES when I was in graduate school, I went out for a beer late one afternoon with another black graduate student whom I'd only known casually before. This student was older than I—a stint in the army had interrupted his education—and he had the reputation of being bright and savvy, of having applied street smarts to the business of getting through graduate school. I suppose I was hoping for what would be called today a little mentoring. But it is probably not wise to drink with someone when you are enamored of his reputation, and it was not long before we stumbled into a moment that seemed to transform him before my very eyes. I asked him what he planned to do when he finished his Ph.D., fully expecting to hear of high aspirations matched with shrewd perceptions on how to reach them. But, before he could think, he said with a kind of exhausted sincerity, "Man, I just want to hold on, get a job that doesn't work me too hard, and do a lot of fishing." Was he joking, I asked. "Hell no," he said with exaggerated umbrage. "I'm not into it like the white boys. I don't need what they need."

I will call this man Henry and report that, until five or six years ago when I lost track of him, he was doing exactly as he said he would do. With much guile and little ambition he had moved through a succession of low-level administrative and teaching jobs, mainly in black studies programs. Of course, it is no crime to just "hold on," and it is hardly a practice limited to blacks. Still, in Henry's case there was truly a troubling discrepancy between his ambition and a fine intelligence recognized by all who knew him. But in an odd way this intelligence was more lateral than vertical, and I would say that it was rechanneled by a

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certain unseen fear into the business of merely holding on. It would be easy to say that Henry had simply decided on life in a slower lane than he was capable of traveling in, or that he was that rare person who had achieved ambitionless contentment. But, if this was so, Henry would have had wisdom rather than savvy, and he would not have felt the need to carry himself with more self-importance than his station justified. I don't think Henry was uninterested in ambition; I think he was afraid of it.

It is certainly true that there is a little of Henry in most people. My own compulsion to understand him informs me that I must have seen many elements of myself in him. And though I'm sure he stands for a universal human blockage, I also believe that there is something in the condition of being black in America that makes the kind of hesitancy he represents one of black America's most serious and debilitating problems. As Henry reached the very brink of expanded opportunity, with Ph.D. in hand, he diminished his ambition almost as though his degree delivered him to a kind of semi-retirement. I don't think blacks in general have any illusions about semi-retirement, but I do think that, as a group, we have hesitated on the brink of new opportunities that we made enormous sacrifices to win for ourselves. The evidence of this lies in one of the most tragic social ironies of late twentieth-century American life—as black Americans have gained in equality and opportunity, we have also declined in relation to whites, so that by many socioeconomic and other measures we are further behind whites today than before the great victories of the civil rights movement. By one report, even the black middle class, which had made great gains in the seventies, began to lose ground to its white counterpart in the eighties. Most distressing of all, the black underclass continues to expand rather than shrink.

Of course, I don't suggest that Henry's peculiar inertia singularly explains social phenomena so complex and tragic. I do believe, however, that blacks in general are susceptible to the same web of attitudes and fears that kept Henry beneath his potential, and that our ineffectiveness in taking better advantage of our greater equality and opportunity has much to do with this. I think there is a specific form of racial anxiety that all blacks are vulnerable to that can, in situations where we must engage the mainstream society, increase our self-doubt and undermine our confidence so that we often back away from the challenges that, if taken, would advance us. I believe this hidden racial anxiety may well now be the strongest barrier to our full participation in the American mainstream—that it is as strong or stronger even than the discrimination we still face. To examine this racial anxiety, allow me first to look at how the Henry was born in me.

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Until the sixth grade, I attended a segregated school in a small working-class black suburb of Chicago. The school was a dumping ground for teachers with too little competence or mental stability to teach in the white school in our district. In 1956 when I entered the sixth grade, I encountered a new addition to the menagerie of misfits that was our faculty—an ex-Marine whose cruelty was suggested during our first lunch hour when he bit the cap off his Coke bottle and spit it into the wastebasket. Looking back I can see that there was no interesting depth to the cruelty he began to show us almost immediately—no consumptive hatred, no intelligent malevolence. Although we were all black and he was white, I don't think he was even particularly racist. He had obviously needed us to like him though he had no faith that we would. He ran the class like a gang leader, picking favorites one day and banishing them the next. And then there was a permanent pool of outsiders, myself among them, who were made to carry the specific sins that he must have feared most in himself.

The sin I was made to carry was the sin of stupidity. I misread a sentence on the first day of school, and my fate was sealed. He made my stupidity a part of the classroom lore, and very quickly I in fact became stupid. I all but lost the ability to read and found the simplest math beyond me. His punishments for my errors rose in meanness until one day he ordered me to pick up all of the broken glass on the playground with my bare hands. Of course, this would have to be the age of the pop bottle, and there were sections of this playground that glared like a mirror in sunlight. After half an hour's labor I sat down on strike, more out of despair than rebellion.

Again, cruelty was no more than a vibration in this man, and so without even a show of anger he commandeered a bicycle, handed it to an eighth grader—one of his lieutenants—and told the boy to run me around the school grounds "until he passes out." The boy was also given a baseball bat to "use on him when he slows down." I ran two laps, about a mile, and then pretended to pass out. The eighth grader knew I was playing possum but could not bring himself to hit me and finally rode off. I exited the school yard through an adjoining cornfield and never returned.

I mention this experience as an example of how one's innate capacity for insecurity is expanded and deepened, of how a disbelieving part of the self is brought to life and forever joined to the believing self. As children we are all wounded in some way and to some degree by the wild world we encounter. From these wounds a disbelieving *anti-self* is born, an internal antagonist and saboteur that embraces the world's negative view of us, that believes our wounds are justified by our own unworthiness, and that entrenches itself as a lifelong voice of doubt. This

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anti-self is a hidden but aggressive force that scours the world for fresh evidence of our unworthiness. When the believing self announces its aspirations, the anti-self always argues against them, but never on their merits (this is a healthy function of the believing self). It argues instead against our worthiness to pursue these aspirations and, by its lights, we are never worthy of even our smallest dreams. The mission of the anti-self is to deflate the believing self and, thus, draw it down into inertia, passivity, and faithlessness.

The anti-self is the unseen agent of low self-esteem; it is a catalytic energy that tries to induce low self-esteem in the believing self as though it were the complete truth of the personality. The anti-self can only be contained by the strength of the believing self, and this is where one's early environment becomes crucial. If the childhood environment is stable and positive, if the family is whole and provides love, the schools good, the community safe, then the believing self will be reinforced and made strong. If the family is shattered, the schools indifferent, the neighborhood a mine field of dangers, the anti-self will find evidence everywhere with which to deflate the believing self.

This does not mean that a bad childhood cannot be overcome. But it does mean—as I have experienced and observed it—that one's *capacity* for self-doubt and self-belief are roughly the same from childhood on, so that years later when the believing self may have strengthened enough to control the anti-self, one will still have the same capacity for doubt whether or not one has the actual doubt. I think it is this struggle between our capacities for doubt and belief that gives our personalities one of their peculiar tensions and, in this way, marks our character.

My own anti-self was given new scope and power by this teacher's persecution of me, and it was so successful in deflating my believing self that I secretly vowed never to tell my parents what was happening to me. The anti-self had all but sold my believing self on the idea that I was stupid, and I did not want to feel that shame before my parents. It was my brother who finally told them, and his disclosure led to a boycott that closed the school and eventually won the dismissal of my teacher and several others. But my anti-self transformed even this act of rescue into a cause of shame—if there wasn't something wrong with me, why did I have to be rescued? The anti-self follows only the logic of self-condemnation.

But there was another dimension to this experience that my anti-self was only too happy to seize upon. It was my race that landed me in this segregated school and, as many adults made clear to me, my persecution followed a timeless pattern of racial persecution. The implications of this were rich food for the anti-self—my race was so despised that it had to be segregated; as a black my education was so unimportant that even

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unbalanced teachers without college degrees were adequate; and ignorance and cruelty that would be intolerable in a classroom of whites was perfectly all right in a classroom of blacks. The anti-self saw no injustice in any of this, but instead took it all as confirmation of a racial inferiority that it could now add to the well of personal doubt I already had. When the adults thought they were consoling me—"Don't worry. They treat all blacks this way"—they were also deepening the wound and expanding my capacity for doubt.

And this is the point. The condition of being black in America means that one will likely endure more wounds to one's self-esteem than others and that the capacity for self-doubt born of these wounds will be compounded and expanded by the black race's reputation of inferiority. The anti-self will most likely have more ammunition with which to deflate the believing self and its aspirations. And the universal human struggle to have belief win out over doubt will be more difficult.

And, more than difficult, it is also made inescapable by the fact of skin color, which, in America, works as a visual invocation of the problem. Black skin has more dehumanizing stereotypes associated with it than any other skin color in America, if not the world. When a black presents himself in an integrated situation, he knows that his skin alone may bring these stereotypes to life in the minds of those he meets and that he, as an individual, may be diminished by his race before he has a chance to reveal a single aspect of his personality. By the symbology of color that operates in our culture, black skin accuses him of inferiority. Under the weight of this accusation, a black will almost certainly doubt himself on some level and to some degree. The ever-vigilant anti-self will grab this racial doubt and mix it into the pool of personal doubt, so that when a black walks into an integrated situation—a largely white college campus, an employment office, a business lunch—he will be vulnerable to the entire realm of his self-doubt before a single word is spoken.

This constitutes an intense and lifelong racial vulnerability and anxiety for blacks. Even though a white American may have been wounded more than a given black, and therefore have a larger realm of inner doubt, his white skin with its connotations of privilege and superiority will actually help protect him from that doubt and from the undermining power of his anti-self, at least in relations with blacks. In fact, the larger the realm of doubt, the more he may be tempted to rely on his white skin for protection from it. Certainly in every self-avowed white racist, whether businessman or member of the Klan, there is a huge realm of self-contempt and doubt that hides behind the mythology of white skin. The mere need to pursue self-esteem through skin color suggests there is no faith that it can be pursued any other way. But if skin color offers whites a certain false esteem and impunity, it offers blacks vulnerability.

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This vulnerability begins for blacks with the recognition that we belong quite simply to the most despised race in the human community of races. To be a member of such a group in a society where all others gain an impunity by merely standing in relation to us is to live with a relentless openness to diminishment and shame. By the devious logic of the anti-self, one cannot be open to such diminishment without in fact being inferior and therefore deserving of diminishment. For the anti-self, the charge verifies the crime, so that racial vulnerability itself is evidence of inferiority. In this sense, the anti-self is an internalized racist, our own subconscious bigot, that conspires with society to diminish us.

So when blacks enter the mainstream, they are not only vulnerable to society's racism but also to the racist within. This internal racist is not restricted by law, morality, or social decorum. It cares nothing about civil rights and equal opportunity. It is the self-doubt born of the original wound of racial oppression, and its mission is to establish the justice of that wound and shackle us with doubt.

Of course, the common response to racial vulnerability, as to most vulnerabilities, is denial—the mind's mechanism for ridding itself of intolerable possibilities. For blacks to acknowledge a vulnerability to inferiority anxiety, in the midst of a society that has endlessly accused us of being inferior, feels nothing less than intolerable—as if we were agreeing with the indictment against us. But denial is not the same as eradication, since it only gives unconscious life to what is intolerable to our consciousness. Denial reassigns rather than vanquishes the terror of racial vulnerability. This reassignment only makes the terror stronger by making it unknown. When we deny we always create a dangerous area of self-ignorance, an entire territory of the self that we cannot afford to know. Without realizing it, we begin to circumscribe our lives by avoiding those people and situations that might breach our denial and force us to see consciously what we fear. Though the denial of racial vulnerability is a human enough response, I think it also makes our public discourse on race circumspect and unproductive, since we cannot talk meaningfully about problems we are afraid to name.

Denial is a refusal of painful self-knowledge. When someone or something threatens to breach this refusal, we receive an unconscious shock of the very vulnerability we have denied—a shock that often makes us retreat and more often makes us intensify our denial. When blacks move into integrated situations or face challenges that are new for blacks, the myth of black inferiority is always present as a *condition* of the situation, and as such it always threatens to breach our denial of racial vulnerability. It threatens to make us realize consciously what is

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intolerable to us—that we have some anxiety about inferiority. We feel this threat unconsciously as a shock of racial doubt delivered by the racist anti-self (always the inner voice of the myth of black inferiority). Consciously, we will feel this shock as a sharp discomfort or a desire to retreat from the situation. Almost always we will want to intensify our denial.

I will call this shock "integration shock" since it occurs most powerfully when blacks leave their familiar world and enter into the mainstream. Integration shock and denial are mutual intensifiers. The stab of racial doubt that integration shock delivers is a pressure to intensify denial, and a more rigid denial means the next stab of doubt will be more threatening and therefore more intense. The symbiosis of these two forces is, I believe, one of the reasons black Americans have become preoccupied with racial pride, almost to the point of obsession over the past twenty-five or so years. With more exposure to the mainstream we have endured more integration shock, more jolts of inferiority anxiety. And I think we have often responded with rather hyperbolic claims of black pride by which we deny that anxiety. In this sense, our self-consciousness around pride, our need to make a point of it, is, to a degree, a form of denial. Pride becomes denial when it ceases to reflect self-esteem quietly and begins to compensate loudly for unacknowledged inner doubt. Here it also becomes dangerous since it prevents us from confronting and overcoming that doubt.

I think the most recent example of black pride-as-denial is the campaign (which seems to have been launched by a committee) to add yet another name to the litany of names that blacks have given themselves over the past century. Now we are to be African-Americans instead of, or in conjunction with, being black Americans. This self-conscious reaching for pride through nomenclature suggests nothing so much as a despair over the possibility of gaining the less conspicuous pride that follows real advancement. In its invocation of the glories of a remote African past and its wistful suggestion of homeland, this name denies the doubt black Americans have about their contemporary situation in America. There is no element of self-confrontation in it, no facing of real racial vulnerabilities, as there was with the name "black." I think "black" easily became the name of preference in the sixties precisely because it was not a denial but a confrontation of inferiority anxiety, with the shame associated with the color black. There was honest self-acceptance in this name, and I think it diffused much of our vulnerability to the shame of color. Even between blacks, "black" is hardly the drop-dead fighting word it was when I was a child. Possibly we are ready now for a new name, but I think "black" has been our most powerful name yet because it so frankly called out our shame and doubt and

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helped us (and others) to accept ourselves. In the name African-American there is too much false neutralization of doubt, too much looking away from the caldron of our own experience. It is a euphemistic name that hides us even from ourselves.

I think blacks have been more preoccupied with pride over the past twenty-five years because we have been more exposed to integration shock since the 1964 Civil Rights Bill made equal opportunity the law of the land (if not quite the full reality of the land). Ironically, it was the inequality of opportunity and all the other repressions of legal segregation that buffered us from our racial vulnerability. In a segregated society we did not have the same accountability to the charge of racial inferiority since we were given little opportunity to disprove the charge. It was the opening up of opportunity—anti-discrimination laws, the social programs of the Great Society, equal opportunity guidelines and mandates, fair housing laws, Affirmative Action, and so on—that made us individually and collectively more accountable to the myth of black inferiority and therefore more racially vulnerable.

This vulnerability has increased in the same proportion that our freedom and opportunity have increased. The exhilaration of new freedom is always followed by a shock of accountability. Whatever unresolved doubt follows the oppressed into greater freedom will be inflamed since freedom always carries a burden of proof, always throws us back on ourselves. And freedom, even imperfect freedom, makes blacks a brutal proposition: if you're not inferior, prove it. This is the proposition that shocks us and makes us vulnerable to our underworld of doubt. The whispers of the racist anti-self are far louder in the harsh accountability of freedom than in subjugation where the oppressor is so entirely to blame.

The bitter irony of all this is that our doubt and the hesitancy it breeds now help limit our progress in America almost as systematically as segregation once did. Integration shock gives the old boundaries of legal segregation a regenerative power. To avoid the shocks of doubt that come from entering the mainstream, or plunging more deeply into it, we often pull back at precisely those junctures where segregation once pushed us back. In this way we duplicate the conditions of our oppression and re-enact our role as victims even in the midst of far greater freedom and far less victimization. Certainly there is still racial discrimination in America, but I believe that the unconscious replaying of our oppression is now the greatest barrier to our full equality.

The way in which integration shock regenerates the old boundaries of segregation for blacks is most evident in three tendencies—the tendency to minimalize or avoid real opportunities, to withhold effort in

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areas where few blacks have achieved, and to self-segregate in integrated situations.

If anything, it is the presence of new opportunities in society that triggers integration shock. If opportunity is a chance to succeed, it is also a chance to fail. The vulnerability of blacks to hidden inferiority anxiety makes failure a much more forbidding prospect. If a black pursues an opportunity in the mainstream—opens a business, goes up for a challenging job or difficult promotion—and fails, that failure can be used by the anti-self to confirm both personal and racial inferiority. The diminishment and shame will tap an impersonal as well as personal source of doubt. When a white fails, he alone fails. His doubt is strictly personal, which gives him more control over the failure. He can discover *his* mistakes, learn the reasons *he* made them, and try again. But the black, laboring under the myth of inferiority, will have this impersonal, culturally determined doubt to contend with. This form of doubt robs him of a degree of control over his failure since he alone cannot eradicate the cultural myth that stings him. There will be a degree of impenetrability to his failure that will constitute an added weight of doubt.

The effect of this is to make mainstream opportunity more intimidating and risky for blacks. This is made worse in that blacks, owing to past and present deprivations, may come to the mainstream in the first place with a lower stock of self-esteem. High risk and low self-esteem are hardly the best combination with which to tackle the challenges of a highly advanced society in which others have been blessed by history with very clear advantages. Under these circumstances opportunity can seem more like a chance to fail than a chance to succeed. All this makes for a kind of opportunity aversion that I think was behind the hesitancy I saw in Henry, in myself, and in other blacks of all class backgrounds. It is also, I believe, one of the reasons for the sharp decline in the number of black students entering college, even as many colleges launch recruiting drives to attract more black students.

This aversion to opportunity generates a way of seeing that minimalizes opportunity to the point where it can be ignored. In black communities the most obvious entrepreneurial opportunities are routinely ignored. It is often outsiders or the latest wave of immigrants who own the shops, restaurants, cleaners, gas stations, and even the homes and apartments. Education is a troubled area in black communities for numerous reasons, but certainly one of them is that many black children are not truly imbued with the idea that learning is virtually the same as opportunity. Schools—even bad schools—were the opportunity that so many immigrant groups used to learn the workings and the spirit of American society. In the very worst inner city schools there are accredited teachers who teach the basics, but too often to students who shun

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those among them who do well, who see studying as a sucker's game and school itself as a waste of time. One sees in many of these children almost a determination not to learn, a suppression of the natural impulse to understand, that cannot be entirely explained by the determinism of poverty. Out of school, in the neighborhood, these same children learn everything. I think it is the meeting with the mainstream that school symbolizes that clicks them off. In the cultural ethos from which they come, it is always these meetings that trigger the aversion to opportunity behind which lies inferiority anxiety. Their parents and their culture send them a double message: go to school but don't really apply yourself. The risk is too high.

This same pattern of avoidance, this unconscious circumvention of possibility, is also evident in our commitment to effort—the catalyst of opportunity. Difficult, sustained effort—in school or career or family life—will be riddled with setbacks, losses, and frustrations. Racial vulnerability erodes effort for blacks by exaggerating the importance of these setbacks, by recasting them as confirmation of racial inferiority rather than the normal pitfalls of sustained effort. The racist anti-self greets these normal difficulties with an I-told-you-so attitude, and the believing self, unwilling to risk seeing that the anti-self is right, may grow timid and pull back from the effort. As with opportunity, racial vulnerability makes hard effort in the mainstream a high-risk activity for blacks.

But this is not the case in those areas where blacks have traditionally excelled. In sports and music, for example, the threat of integration shock is effectively removed. Because so many blacks have succeeded in these areas, a black can enter them without being racially vulnerable. Failure carries no implication of racial inferiority, so the activity itself is far less risky than those in which blacks have no record of special achievement. Certainly in sports and music one sees blacks sustain the most creative and disciplined effort, and they seize opportunities where one would have thought there were none. But all of this changes the instant racial vulnerability becomes a factor. Across the country thousands of young black males take every opportunity and make every effort to reach the elite ranks of the NBA or the NFL. But in the classroom, where racial vulnerability is a hidden terror, they and many of their classmates put forth the meagerest effort and show a virtual indifference to the genuine opportunity that education is.

But the most visible circumvention that results from integration shock is the tendency toward self-segregation that, if anything, seems to have increased over the last twenty years. Along with opportunity and effort, it is also white people themselves who are often avoided. I hear young black professionals say they do not socialize with whites after

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work unless at some "command performance" that comes with the territory of their career. On largely white university campuses where integration shock is particularly intense, black students often try to enforce a kind of neo-separatism that includes black "theme" dorms, black student unions, Afro-houses, black cultural centers, black student lounges, and so on. There is a geo-politics involved in this activity, where race is tied to territory in a way that mimics the "whites only"/ "coloreds only" designations of the past. Only now these race spaces are staked out in the name of pride.

I think this impulse to self-segregate, to avoid whites, has to do with the way white people are received by the black anti-self. Even if the believing self wants to see racial difference as essentially meaningless, the anti-self, that hidden perpetrator of racist doubt, sees white people as better than black people. Its mission is to confirm black inferiority, and so it looks closely at whites, watches the way they walk, talk, and negotiate the world, and then grants these styles of being and acting superiority. Somewhere inside every black is a certain awe at the power and achievement of the white race. In every barbershop gripe session where whites are put through the grinder of black anger, there will be a kind of backhanded respect—"Well, he might be evil, but that white boy is smart." True or not, the anti-self organizes its campaign against the believing self 's faith in black equality around this supposition. And so, for blacks (as is true for whites in another way), white people in the generic sense have no neutrality. In themselves they are stimulants to the black anti-self, deliverers of doubt. Their color slips around the deepest need of blacks to believe in their immutable equality and communes directly with their self-suspicion.

So it is not surprising to hear black students on largely white campuses say that they are simply more comfortable with other blacks. Nor is it surprising to see them caught up in absurd contradictions—demanding separate facilities for themselves even as they protest apartheid in South Africa. Racial vulnerability is a species of fear, and, as such, it is the progenitor of countless ironies. More freedom makes us more vulnerable so that in the midst of freedom we feel the impulse to carve out segregated comfort zones that protect us more from our own doubt than from whites. We balk before opportunity and pull back from effort just as these things would bear fruit. We reconstitute the boundaries of segregation just as they become illegal. By averting opportunity and curbing effort for fear of awakening a sense of inferiority, we make inevitable the very failure that shows us inferior.

One of the worst aspects of oppression is that it never ends when the oppressor begins to repent. There is a legacy of doubt in the oppressed

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that follows long after the cleanest repentance by the oppressor, just as guilt trails the oppressor and makes his redemption incomplete. These themes of doubt and guilt fill in like fresh replacements and work to duplicate the oppression. I think black Americans are today more oppressed by doubt than by racism and that the second phase of our struggle for freedom must be a confrontation with that doubt. Unexamined, this doubt leads us back into the tunnel of our oppression where we re-enact our victimization just as society struggles to end its victimization of us. We are not a people formed in freedom. Freedom is always a call to possibility that demands an overcoming of doubt. We are still new to freedom, new to its challenges, new even to the notion that self-doubt can be the slyest enemy of freedom. For us freedom has so long meant the absence of oppression that we have not yet realized that it also means the conquering of doubt.

Of course, this does not mean that doubt should become a lake we swim in, but it does mean that we should begin our campaign against doubt by acknowledging it, by outlining the contours of the black anti-self so that we can know and accept exactly what it is that we are afraid of. This is knowledge that can be worked with, knowledge that can point with great precision to the actions through which we can best mitigate doubt and advance ourselves. This is the sort of knowledge that gives the believing self a degree of immunity to the anti-self and that enables it to pile up little victories that, in sum, grant it even more immunity.

Certainly inferiority has long been the main theme of the black anti-self, its most lethal weapon against our capacity for self-belief. And so, in a general way, the acceptance of this piece of knowledge implies a mission: to show ourselves and (only indirectly) the larger society that we are not inferior on any dimension. That this should already be assumed goes without saying. But what "should be" falls within the province of the believing self where it has no solidity until the doubt of the anti-self is called out and shown false by demonstrable action in the real world. This is the proof that grants the "should" its rightful solidity, that transforms it from a well-intentioned claim into a certainty.

The temptation is to avoid so severe a challenge, to maintain a black identity, painted in the colors of pride and culture, that provides us with a way of seeing ourselves apart from this challenge. It is easier to be "African-American" than to organize oneself on one's own terms and around one's own aspiration and then, through sustained effort and difficult achievement, put one's insidious anti-self quietly to rest. No black identity, however beautifully conjured, will spare blacks this challenge that, despite its fairness or unfairness, is simply in the nature of things. But then I have faith that in time we will meet this challenge since this, too, is in the nature of things.

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Dishes

WILLIAM AARNES

The most important room is the kitchen.

If we talk at all,
we argue politics over the dishes,
my father washing and rinsing
the silver while his son the socialist
claims Kennedy lacks nerve, offering
proof with a towel snap.

This chore's
our routine.

As the suds drain,
we stand arm in arm, watching
ourselves in the window. Outside
the dark, two hours old, is cold. Here
in the window we warm ourselves:
one grows taller, one grows smaller,
one wears an apron, one refuses . . .
and we delight each other,
rehearsing the next night's encore.

Between us a hundred broken glasses.

Beyond the screen the lilac hedge
blossoms, but today we have nothing to say:

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one, tired of climbing recently mopped,
filthy stairways to classrooms where his nostrils
itch with dust, considers his life
futile; and one, having discovered death
in the parentheses beneath a living
author's name, counts, again and again,
the years he can hope to live. Each alone,
we share the silent task of denial.

We have left the skillet to soak.

✪ WILLIAM AARNES teaches at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina. His poems have appeared in *Ploughshares*, the *Southern Review*, and the *South Carolina Review*.

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Women

JIM HALL

An egg is dropped
from three feet
onto a cement floor
in Guatemala.

This is repeated
later in Yellow Springs,
Ohio, and again
in Indonesia.

Each time a different girl,
a young one,
who is the subject
of these experiments

winces her pulse
as the egg falls.

She sees what's coming
and her fear
is confirmed over and over
as the scientist splatters

egg upon egg, each time
timing her response.

Her reaction is named
precociousness,
and we are told
by the egg droppers

that such a reaction shows

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girls to be more expert
in fear, than boys,

who wait until the yolk
has run, before letting
loose their pulse.

Boys, it appears,
do not worry, but wait
until what is going
to happen has.

This girl fear, this
precociousness, it is said
is what makes girls
more cautious, more likely
to survive childhood.

And when the moon rises heavy
above the mangroves
and I reach for your hand,
it is why
your hand is there, open.

✪ JIM HALL teaches at Florida International University in Miami. His most recent book of poems is *False Statements*, published by Carnegie-Mellon University Press

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Art for Law's Sake

RICHARD A. POSNER

THERE IS PERSISTENT, PERHAPS INTENSIFYING, controversy over offensive art. It is well illustrated by the recent brouhaha over "Piss Christ." A photograph (which I have not seen) by Andres Serrano of a plastic crucifix immersed in a bottle of the artist's urine, "Piss Christ" won a prize funded by a federal grant, sparking proposals to attach conditions to public support of the arts that would prevent future public subsidies of blasphemous, obscene, or otherwise offensive works. The questions raised by the Serrano work were shortly afterward exacerbated by the removal from the Corcoran Gallery of an exhibition, also supported by public funds, of photographs by the late Robert Mapplethorpe on subjects homoerotic and, some have argued, sadomasochistic into the bargain. Among the photographs (which, again, I have not seen) is one that is reported to show a black man urinating into the mouth of a white man. But I shall concentrate on "Piss Christ," which poses the issue of public regulation of offensive art in a particularly useful way. Despite or perhaps because of my being a member of the judiciary, I do not want to discuss the legality of proposals to restrict public funding of offensive art. I want instead to discuss the larger philosophical and jurisprudential issues raised by such art. Concretely I want to argue that nowadays there is no objective method of determining what is art or what is offensive, and to consider whether, if this is right, it implies that offensive art should get a lot, or a little—or even no—protection from governmental interference, however that interference should be defined in this setting. For example, is it interference when the government grants, or when it withdraws, a subsidy to the arts?

When we say that lead is heavier than aluminum or that an automobile is faster than a rickshaw, we make a statement that can be verified by methods independent of the tastes or personal values of the people doing the verifying. A Communist, a nudist, a Jehovah's Witness, and a

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follower of Ayn Rand will all agree on how to test such propositions and on how to interpret the test results. Such "observer independence" gives the propositions about lead and automobiles truth value, makes them objective. It is quite otherwise if we say that "Piss Christ" has, or does not have, artistic value. The problem is not that artistic value is not a thing which a work either has or has not, for in this respect artistic value is no different from weight or speed, being like them an attribute or property rather than a thing. You don't take apart a Maserati and announce, "This is the carburetor and that is the speed." Similarly, "Piss Christ" is not a composite of urine, a bottle, a crucifix, a photograph, and artistic value.

But while it is possible to make objective measurements of physical properties such as weight and speed, it is not possible to make such measurements of artistic value, because people having different values and preferences do not agree and cannot be brought to agree on how to determine the presence of that attribute or even how to define it. A moralistic critic such as Tolstoy might think that the most important question about "Piss Christ" from an artistic standpoint is its likely effect on belief in Christianity. A Marxist critic might agree, and might further agree with Tolstoy that "Piss Christ" would undermine that belief, yet they would disagree about whether this made the work valuable or pernicious. Even if everyone to whom judges are willing to listen agrees that a work has no artistic value, we know from historical experience that it may; later generations may find such value in the work even though the artist's contemporaries did not. Conversely, a work highly valued in its time, or for that matter in later times, may eventually come to seem thoroughly meretricious. Artistic value is something an audience invests a work with, and as the tastes of audiences change, so do judgments of artistic value. About all that can be said in a positive vein is that the longer a work is held in high repute the likelier it is to continue to be held in high repute. This is the "test of time" that Samuel Johnson, David Hume, and George Orwell thought the only objective test of artistic merit. If, to take a concrete example, the Homeric epics are still being read more than twenty-five hundred years after they were composed, then chances are they will continue to be highly regarded for some time; their appeal is robust and resists cultural change.

So far, though, all we have established is an inductive generalization, not an explanation. We could try to figure out what such durable works as the *Iliad* and *Hamlet* and Raphael's madonnas and *The Marriage of Figaro* and the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and the Louvre's "Winged Victory of Samothrace" have in common and call that the key to artistic value. But this sort of thing has been attempted for millennia without success, and it now seems clear that the quest is a snipe hunt, so diverse

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are the durable works of the Western tradition. Conceivably we might identify a *necessary* condition of artistic survival—that a work have a certain "omnisignificance" or, less portentously, a certain ambiguity or generality that enables it to be taken in different ways in different times and places. But the distinction between a necessary and a sufficient condition is critical here, for we would not concede artistic value to every work that crossed some threshold of ambiguity or generality. "Piss Christ" deals with a fundamental concern of humankind, religion, and does so in a distinctly ambiguous way. Serrano denies harboring any blasphemous intent and indeed claims—for all I know, with complete sincerity—that "Piss Christ" is a Christian commentary on the debasement of religion in modern America. The work may have artistic or even moral value, and then again it may not; it may soon come to be thought a worthless bit of trash. If it seems altogether too slight and ephemeral a work to have *any* chance of winning a secure niche in art history, let us remind ourselves that Marcel Duchamp's toilet seat, one of the objets trouvés of the Dadaist movement, has won such a niche along with Goya's disgusting painting "Saturn Eating His Children."

The conclusion to which I am driven is that ascriptions of artistic value or valuelessness to "works of art"—especially to contemporary works of art—are arbitrary. And so with offensiveness, another property of, not a thing found in, a work. "Piss Christ" is no more a compound of urine, a bottle, a crucifix, and offensiveness than it is a compound of urine, a bottle, a crucifix, a photograph, and artistic value. Again this property, offensiveness, is largely, perhaps entirely, a matter of public opinion rather than of correspondence to or causation by something that is observer independent, something akin to the forces that determine weight and speed in accordance with the laws of physics.

This is not a problem when public opinion is united, as perhaps it is over the offensiveness of certain particularly graphic or degrading types of visual obscenity. With specific reference to "Piss Christ" one might be tempted to argue that, while there may be no consensus on what is art, there is a consensus, in Western societies anyway, that the public display of excreta is offensive. Consensus is a highly fallible warrant of truth, yet we might grant it provisionally objective status, even when it is local and temporary—a consensus in our society today, although not in all others and perhaps not in ours tomorrow. But it is a mistake to suppose that there is a consensus concerning the offensiveness of public displays of excreta. If samples of diabetics' or addicts' urine, or the feces of sufferers from Crohn's disease or cancer of the colon were displayed at a medical convention, we would not think the display offensive. It is all a matter of context and purpose. The question of the offensiveness of "Piss Christ" is therefore connected to the question of its artistic value. Those who

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find the work artistically valuable will not be offended by the (photographic) presence of urine, which they will consider integral to the work's value. Those who find the work blasphemous and barren of artistic value will consider the display of urine gratuitous and hence, given our culture's feelings about excreta, offensive. A few people may find the work both offensive and aesthetic, as many find Ezra Pound's *Cantos* or Vachel Lindsay's *Congo*. Their judgment on whether "Piss Christ" should be suppressed will depend on how offensive, and on how aesthetic, they find it, and on their personal sense of the proper balance between art and insult.

All this (to turn now from philosophy to jurisprudence) would have little or nothing to do with law if law had its own values, if it were morally autonomous. But for the most part it does not and is not. The law that entitles the victim of negligence to collect damages from the injurer is parasitic on—has no life apart from—social norms concerning what is careful and what is careless behavior. The prohibition in the First Amendment against government's abridging freedom of speech or freedom of the press, broadly conceived to include artistic as well as political and scientific expression, is parasitic in the same sense on social norms concerning artistic as well as other "speech" values and offensiveness and other speech harms such as violence. If a speaker urges a mob to lynch a prisoner because his guilt is so plain that a trial would be a waste of time and money, the speaker will be punishable for incitement to violence, because the danger of the speech will be felt to outweigh its value in drawing attention to the problematic character of due process. But if instead he writes a book urging the masses to rise up and liquidate the bosses, he will not be punishable, because such books are thought to have some value and not to be very dangerous, although citizens of Communist states may want to dispute both points. If our society thought such books were dangerous, they would be suppressed. Practical considerations, rather than the text or the eighteenth-century background of the First Amendment, guide the application of the amendment to today's problems.

Certain forms of obscenity are considered by virtually everyone in our society (including many of the consumers of obscene works) to be completely worthless and highly offensive, and they are suppressed without much ado, although, it must be added, also without much success. But the consensus that condemns the extremely obscene does not extend to the class of works illustrated by "Piss Christ," which are thought valuable and non-offensive by some, worthless and offensive by others, worthwhile but offensive by a handful. If there is no objective way to arbitrate such a disagreement, what should the courts do? More

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broadly, what are the implications for law of the kind of cultural relativism that I am describing?

There are three possibilities here, of which the first two reflect a desire to secure definiteness in law at any price. The first is to forbid *any* governmental interference with "art," no matter how offensive the "art." This approach does not escape subjectivity entirely; rather, it pushes inquiry back a stage, to the question of whether the work in question *is* art (and also to what counts as governmental "interference"). If a work is sufficiently offensive, it is classified as obscene, and therefore as non-art.

At the other extreme is the judicial-hands-off approach: Courts are the forum of principle, there are no principles to apply to questions of aesthetic merit and offensiveness, so let the political branches do what they want with these questions. Such an approach is likely to appeal to those who are especially protective of courts—who want the judges to shine and believe that the judicial escutcheon is tarnished when the judges mess in indeterminate questions such as artistic value and offensiveness.

The third possible approach, the intermediate or pragmatic, is to acknowledge that the problem of relativism, moral as well as aesthetic, so strikingly presented by a work such as "Piss Christ," is a general feature of American, and perhaps of any, legal controversy. Judges need not feel they must shy off merely because the issues raised by offensive art are spongy. That's just the way things are in law; the nature of the legal enterprise ensures that judges will frequently find themselves wrestling with indeterminate questions, because those are the questions least likely to be settled without recourse to lawsuits that have to be pressed all the way to the Supreme Court or to another high appellate court before the question can be answered. Judges struggle with such questions all the time yet somehow manage to retain that minimum of public respect which is indispensable to the effectiveness of a court system. They are unlikely to forfeit it if they venture—with appropriate caution—into the controversy that eddies around issues of value and taste in purported works of art. The significance of the qualification will, I hope, become clearer as I proceed.

The first thing to note about this venture is that although artistic value is largely, perhaps entirely, unknowable, there is little doubt that art is valuable. If this seems a paradox, consider: The lesson of history is that many of the scientific theories in which we firmly believe today are almost certainly false, just as Euclidean geometry as a theory of spatial relations, the geocentric theory of the solar system, the luminiferous ether, the spontaneous generation of bacteria, and Newton's laws of motion are now known to be false after having been believed by the scientific community for centuries. Yet the fallibility of scientific theory

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does not lead a sensible person to doubt the existence, growth, or value of scientific knowledge. Even if every current scientific theory is someday falsified, we will still be able to make atomic bombs, fly airplanes, and immunize people against polio. Likewise it is a fact that art museums are thronged, that works of art command huge prices, that some people devote a lifetime to the study of art, and, more to the point, that many people would feel a profound sense of deprivation if the French Academy had succeeded in suppressing Impressionist art just as they feel that the world is a poorer place because so little classical Greek sculpture has survived.

If we grant that art has value and add that the censorship of art has a dreadful historical record, we can derive, in order to guide judicial review of controversies over offensive art, a presumption in favor of letting the stuff be produced and exhibited to whoever is willing to pay the price of admission. The Supreme Court's recent decision in the flag-burning case illustrates the presumption. Flag burning is an offensive, inarticulate, and immature mode of political communication (at least when the flag is our own), but as long as one is burning a flag one bought and paid for, before a willing audience, the flag burning contributes, however feebly, to the marketplace of ideas without impairing anybody's property rights.

We can bolster the presumption in favor of a permissive judicial attitude toward offensive art by noting that the "test of time" that is the closest we seem able to get to an objective measure of artistic value presupposes, like natural selection in the theory of biological evolution (which the test of time resembles), the existence of variety, from which history makes its selections. The whole thrust of censorship is to reduce variety, to suppress outliers, and by doing this it interferes with the test of time and impoverishes art's legacy to the future.

I don't mean "presumption" in any fancy lawyer's sense. I just mean that judges should be highly suspicious of anything that smacks of censorship. But since it is only a presumption that I am defending, judges should also be sensitive to arguments for rebutting it in particular cases, even at the risk of occasionally being found guilty by history of the sort of folly illustrated by the audience that was scandalized when *The Playboy of the Western World* was first performed in 1907 because Synge used the word "shift" for a woman's slip. There is such a thing as worrying too much about history's verdict on one's actions.

Consider a case in which the presumption in favor of freedom of artistic expression was successfully rebutted. The case was decided by my court years ago, and since it is quite over and done with, I can discuss it without violating professional proprieties.

The case, *Piarowski v. Illinois Community College*, involved a small

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junior college near Chicago that, being public, was subject to the constitutional limitations on restricting free expression. The artist in the case, who was the chairman of the college's art department, made an improbable effort to fuse his two loves—the making of stained-glass windows and the art of Aubrey Beardsley—by making stained-glass versions of some of Beardsley's illustrations from Aristophanes' comedy *Lysistrata*. The illustrations, like the comedy, are bawdy even by today's standards (how fitting that they should be on public display in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London). They are, of course, line drawings of white men and women—Greeks. To transpose the drawings to the stained-glass medium, the artist in my case used pieces of colored glass for each of the figures, and the colors had to contrast. He made the innocent but, as it turned out, unfortunate choice of amber glass for the women and white glass for the men. As a result, one of the stained-glass windows depicts a brown woman, naked except for stockings, on her knees, embracing in an attitude of veneration the huge white phallus of a robed man. The other two windows depict brown women passing wind and masturbating, respectively.

The artist hung the windows in the art department's annual exhibition of faculty work, held in an alcove (the "gallery") off the main corridor of the college (the "mall," as it is called), on the ground floor. As the college has only one building, the exhibition was visible to all students, faculty, and visitors, whether or not they wanted to see it—more especially as there is no wall between the gallery and the mall. The first group to complain was the cleaning staff, which was black. Most of the students in the college are black, and they, too, were offended by the stained-glass windows and complained to the president of the college, who ordered the artist to shift the display from the first-floor corridor to a smaller exhibition room on the fourth floor, a room normally used for exhibiting photographs but suitable for exhibiting other works of art as well. When the artist refused, the president took down the stained-glass windows and placed them in his office. The artist sued the college, alleging a violation of the First Amendment.

Having studied photographs of Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations for *Lysistrata*, I find the stained-glass pastiches to be essentially free of both artistic value and offensiveness. Beardsley's charm is in the line, and it is lost when lines give way to chunks of colored glass. On the other hand, there was no contention that the chairman of the art department was attempting a commentary on race or sex; he was merely trying to use different colors, vaguely human, to distinguish the figures in the windows from one another. And the very crudeness of the windows neutralizes any obscene impact. For the reasons stated earlier, however, I have no basis for confidence in my or any other judge's ability either to

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evaluate the artistry of the stained-glass windows or to gauge their offensiveness to a community in which Aubrey Beardsley is not a household word.

A "hands-off relativist" might take the position that since issues of artistic and moral taste are not objective, the artist should have lost his suit even if the college had refused to allow him to exhibit his stained-glass windows anywhere on (or for that matter off) the campus. This was not the court's view, but neither did we think the Constitution *entitled* him to exhibit his windows in the most public place in the college. The college's president had offered an alternative place of exhibition that, while indeed less conspicuous, was by the same token less offensive. Racial sensitivities are a fact in our society, and if, as I have argued, offensiveness ultimately is no more objective than artistic value, neither is it less so. The college president's action seemed a reasonable compromise, and the court gave judgment for the college. In so doing, we affirmed that "academic freedom" is a two-way street. It is the freedom of a college to manage its affairs without undue judicial interference no less than it is the freedom of the teacher or scholar to teach or write or, in this case, create works of art without undue interference by the state (for remember that this was a public college, and hence an arm of the state). A further point worth making is that the power of a single junior college to affect the art scene by shunting offensive works to less conspicuous places of exhibition is distinctly limited. But of course the example might prove catching.

So particularistic and fact-specific—so pragmatic—a mode of adjudication that led to the judgment for the college, and that implies that the scope of First Amendment protection may be different for works of art than for political or scientific works, is not to everyone's taste. Lawyers have a predilection for rules, and there indeed are many occasions when hard-edged rules are preferable to fuzzy standards, but controversies over offensive art may not be one of them. It is not even clear that art would be helped rather than hindered by a rule that forbade any and all public regulation of offensive art. Such a rule—a rule that gave privileged status to the *flaunting* of offensive art—might engender public hostility to art that would be out of all proportion to the benefits in artistic freedom gained. On the other hand, a rule that gave government carte blanche to suppress art deemed offensive by any vocal, assertive, politically influential group in our diverse, teeming, and (let us face it) rather philistine society could impair the future of art, a costly consequence. So perhaps the watchword in First Amendment cases having to do with art should indeed be *caution*.

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Higher (-Priced) Education

JAY AMBERG

FOR WELL OVER A YEAR NOW, my daughter, a senior in high school, has been deluged with a dizzying array of letters and promotional brochures from colleges and universities around the country. The mail comes from every imaginable type of four-year school—from Northern Illinois University and the University of Southern California, Wesleyan in Connecticut and Illinois Wesleyan, Monmouth College and Colorado State University. And this glitzy hummock of material, despite the marked differences in the colleges, presents a remarkably similar picture of college life. All of the brochures feature glossy color photos of undergraduates sitting on verdant lawns with their textbooks spread out around them, coeds pecking at computer keyboards, students strolling and bicycling through sunshine, and smiling professors invariably encircled by small groups of enrapt students.

As my daughter and I visited campuses, I couldn't help but notice that universities—public and private, large and small—are undergoing a building boomlet unrelated to any demographic trends. Despite an almost static undergraduate population, concrete and reflective glass structures are sprouting on campuses across the country. These new academic cathedrals, like the promotional materials, present a common theme. They are not, for the most part, classroom buildings, laboratories, or libraries, but rather student unions, art museums, and sports and recreation centers. The highlights of many campus tours tend to be not lab stations and study carrels but indoor tennis courts and large-screen televisions in plush lounges. While it is true that presenting the frills to visitors is far more expedient than demonstrating the intellectual rigor on any campus, my experiences over the last year have still led me to wonder exactly what is happening at American colleges and universities these days.

The most salient change in undergraduate education in the 1980s has, of course, been skyrocketing prices. With its 1988–89 cost of tuition, fees,

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room, and board topping $18,900, Bennington College retained the dubious distinction of being the most expensive college in the nation. But Bennington is by no means alone in the price stratosphere. The ten most expensive schools all cost more than $18,000, and most four-year schools, public and private, have been increasing their prices at an astounding rate. For eight straight years college prices have risen at a rate more than double that of inflation. Between 1980 and 1985, college costs, adjusted for inflation, rose 64 percent. Throughout the 1980s the average annual increase has been almost 10 percent, a rate higher even than the much-publicized increase in medical care. And there is no end in sight: Senator Edward Kennedy, as chairman of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, predicts that by the year 2005 the total cost of a college education at selective private schools will be $140,000. More startling still, a Merrill Lynch computer projection of costs twenty years from now puts the total at more than a quarter of a million dollars for an Ivy League education.

When Bennington first gained national attention for its price tag, a student said, "To me, the price is secondary. Money becomes an abstract thing here." Bennington's president, for his part, asked, "Why should we apologize for what we charge?" Although this sounds glibly arrogant, it presents a view shared by many college spokesmen, who insist that prices are driven solely by necessary expenditures. Michael O'Keefe, president of the Consortium for the Advancement of Private Education, says, "Colleges are spending more to provide things that students and their parents want and demand." The president of American University, Richard Berendzen, while explaining his school's 93 percent increase in seven years, echoed the standard line: "We had to have these increases. We do not sit and think, 'What's the maximum we can go?' To the contrary, it is 'What is the minimum we need to meet our needs?' "

But *need* is a funny word, as an analysis of college expenditures confirms. A comparison of data from the National Center for Educational Statistics reports of 1975–76 and 1985–86 shows that the greatest increases in expenditures have not been in instruction and operations but rather in more nebulous areas, such as "Academic Support" and "Institutional Support." In fact, among universities, instruction has shown the smallest increase among all categories of expenditures. Academic support, which at universities increased 46 percent above inflation, includes expenditures for academic administration, educational materials, and media and technology. Student services, which has had the second greatest increase (41 percent above inflation), includes "expenditures for administrative functions, services, and activities that contribute to student development outside of the instructional program, such as admissions, student aid administration, health services and counseling, and cultural events."

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What is common to both of these categories (other than that neither is directly related to the quality of instruction) is an increase in administrative costs. Between 1982 and 1986 alone, administrative spending rose 17 percent above inflation despite the fact that the number of full-time students in college did not rise significantly. These increases have been especially large in three areas—financial aid, development, and admissions. In the 1980s, as tuition prices have risen, financial aid has become an increasingly greater part of college expenditures. Institutional aid to students has increased almost 66 percent in this decade, and financial aid now accounts for 14 percent of universities' expenditures. In 1986–87, 52.6 percent of students in all four-year colleges and universities received some form of financial aid, and at private four-year schools more than 60 percent of the students received aid. In 1987–88, financial aid to college students (including graduate students as well as undergraduates) reached a record $24.5 billion.

In this decade, paying for college has become more difficult for the average American family because financial aid, like personal income, has not kept pace with soaring college prices. University spokesmen tend to blame this increased burden on a lack of support from the federal government, but the facts belie such assertions. The federal government still supplies 75 percent of financial aid while institutions provide only 19 percent. Between 1980–81 and 1987–88, federally supported programs of generally available aid increased 22.4 percent in constant 1982 dollars. This then suggests that, despite complaints about the federal government, colleges and universities have had to provide additional aid primarily to cover their own steep price increases. Although at a few universities a high proportion of financial aid comes from endowments, at most institutions increases in financial aid must come primarily from tuition payments. At some schools, as much as half of the income raised through tuition hikes must be used to cover the subsequent increases in financial aid. And, as the increases in financial aid drive up the following year's tuition, the fiscal snake devours its own tail.

This counterproductive cost-aid spiral has also increased university expenditures in distributing financial aid because each tuition hike creates an even greater burden on the system. The staff needed to process the huge number of applications for grants and loans and then to disburse the money is extensive. At Iowa State University, for instance, the financial aid office's 1975 budget was $100,000. In 1987 the same budget was a million dollars.

The development offices at many universities are now larger than most academic departments; colleges are soliciting more and receiving larger donations than ever before. Huge capital campaigns (most notably a $1.1 billion drive at Stanford) have become the rule rather than the

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exception at selective private universities, and endowments are often enormous. Harvard's, for example, is approximately $4 billion, and Princeton's, which is $2.3 billion, rose from $91,000 per student in 1980 to more than $300,000 per student by 1987. Annual endowment studies conducted by the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) show that across the country the size of endowments is increasing both steadily and sharply. Among colleges and universities responding to the 1984 NACUBO survey, cumulative endorsements and life income funds totaled $25.2 billion. By 1987, this total had almost doubled to $47.9 billion.

How and why development offices are becoming the core of many private universities can perhaps best be shown through the example of the University of San Francisco. In May of 1986, when Robert Glavin became Director of Development, the university's endowment was approximately $16 million. By December 1988, the endowment had increased to $30 million. In 1986, the university had already made a commitment to improve fund-raising, and Glavin's primary task was to hire professional people who had been involved in development elsewhere. At the heart of development, Glavin suggests, is the research office staff that tracks potential donors able to make significant contributions. All of the work is done on computers, and, in fact, the development office has the largest data base on USF's campus, a data base that keeps records on seventy thousand people and has the capability of storing forty screens of data on each person. By tapping into other data bases, such as those provided by Dow Jones and the Real Estate Index, the development staff can match gifts sought with the resources of possible donors.

The University of San Francisco development office also has an information office, donor services department, an office of annual giving, an office of corporate and foundation relations, an office of athletic development, and a capital campaign office. USF is currently completing an $18 million capital campaign to build the health and recreation center that opened in February 1989. There has been some resentment among faculty concerning the non-academic nature of the current capital campaign, but, as Glavin points out, the building is generally viewed as important. The university's academic program is funded primarily by tuition, and USF is experiencing an 18 percent increase in undergraduate admissions, at least in part because of the new building. Glavin says, "Applying students can see amenities like the recreation center more easily than they can see the school's academic strengths."

Admissions itself has increasingly become a big budget item for universities. Mass mailings of thousands of unsolicited brochures (at a cost of three to five dollars apiece), extensive recruiting trips, mammoth

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lists of prospective students, and sophisticated marketing guides (like the College Board's Enrollment Planning Service) have become commonplace. The 1986 "Report of a Survey of Undergraduate Admissions Policies, Practices, and Procedures" concluded that "all recruiting has increased since 1979" and that virtually every category of recruiting activity "shows an increase, ranging from moderate increases in formerly heavily used techniques to doubling and sometimes tripling of formerly little-used devices." These "devices" include advertising on television and radio and in newspapers as well as such more traditional activities as college nights and high school visits by staff. Student visits to campuses have also increased, and in some cases are paid for by the school. Bowdoin College, for example, spent $19,800 on a weekend visit for thirty-four minority students.

All of these marketing activities geared toward recruiting are expensive, but if one university markets itself aggressively, others feel compelled to do the same simply to stay competitive. Costs soar as more universities follow on the coattails of the "trend-setters." Although admissions officers are reluctant to discuss costs, the money spent to enroll each freshman at America's four-year colleges and universities is astronomical. The average cost, according to one source, is approximately $800 per student; and the costs at private colleges that do not have "designer labels"—as national name recognition is known—can be far greater. In 1987, Harvey Mudd College in California, for example, spent $1,500 per freshman who enrolled, and Grinnell College in Iowa incurred $2,500 in admissions office expenses for each of its enrolled freshmen.

The primary reason for these expenses has been a change in the college admissions officers' mission from selection to recruitment and marketing. Phrases like "market share," "marketing challenge," "market forces," and "market penetration" have become the regular argot of admissions officers. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) Enrollment Planning Service, for instance, promises to provide information that would enable admissions officers to "gain an in-depth knowledge of your competition on a market-by-market basis" and "boost your yield from your strongest markets." Universities also now hold colloquia on marketing, and the College Board puts out such publications as "Marketing in College Admissions: A Broadening of Perspectives." In this particular publication, one reads such terms as "survival crisis" and "scramble for survival," which suggest that American colleges are becoming endangered species. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. In 1987–88, higher education, which accounted for 40 percent of all money spent on education in America, was a $124 billion industry, comprising almost 3 percent of the nation's gross national product. And, college enrollments in 1987 were estimated to be at an all-time high.

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Still, colleges and universities justify the huge development campaigns, high administrative costs, expensive marketing activities, and, indeed, exorbitant prices on the basis that all of this fosters competition—a word they use in a way almost as strange as their use of *need.* Michael O'Keefe says, "We [Americans] opted for a highly competitive environment and should not be surprised that with it comes additional costs. Colleges will strive to offer services they perceive students want, to make campuses attractive, to promote themselves with prospective students. Yes, costs will increase, but so will the benefits to students and society." Not only does O'Keefe fail to mention the students' instruction, but he admits that the primary competition—and perhaps the only *real* competition—among American colleges and universities is to attract students rather than to educate them. Nor is it possible to imagine how society benefits from soaring college costs driven by amenities students are "perceived" to desire, campuses that have undergone beautification, and universities steeped in self-promotion. The inescapable conclusion is that American colleges and universities in the 1980s appear to be more concerned with attracting students to an "upscale" collegiate "lifestyle"—in Christopher Baldwin's words, "Club Med with Books!"—than in preparing students for life.

But is this conclusion fair? After all, there is, despite the costs, nothing inherently wrong with colleges promoting a particular image. Marketing doesn't in any way *cause* education to worsen. The education itself is something separate from the image, the substance distinct from the packaging. In fact, amenities and increased costs might well be justified if there were in this decade a commensurate commitment to instruction. Unfortunately, what evidence there is suggests that, at the same time that costs have been rising, the quality of instruction has been declining.

That college students are learning less than college students of previous generations is difficult to prove, in part because very few colleges measure what, if anything, their students learn. Clifford Adelman of the National Commission on Excellence in Education notes: "The commission and its staff found it odd that large-scale research on growth and change in college students, with a few dated exceptions, has focused on every conceivable topic other than students' academic learning." In fact, the only indicators that are at all relevant are students' Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores and data from the 1985 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Between 1964 and 1987, scores on the GRE, which measures achievement of students applying to graduate schools, have declined significantly, particularly in the social sciences and humanities. (The decline of verbal GRE scores has been more precipitous than that of verbal SAT scores—a decline that

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has been used to pillory American secondary school education.) According to the NAEP report, half of the college graduates aged twenty-one to twenty-five performed below acceptable standards on literacy scales. These graduates lacked the skills necessary for such tasks as "summarizing in writing an argument made in a lengthy newspaper column and calculating the amount of a tip for a restaurant bill using a prescribed percentage." Admittedly, neither the GRE nor the NAEP is an excellent measure of students' performance in college. The GRE is only taken by a self-selected population—those applying to graduate schools; the NAEP demonstrates a low level of performance but makes no comparison to graduates of previous eras. Still, the GRE decline and the NAEP results, taken together, suggest that current college graduates may not be receiving the education for which they are paying.

It would be easy, of course, to blame the students themselves for low literacy scores, something college professors are apt to do. More than half of the faculty respondents in a nationwide Carnegie Foundation survey in 1984 rated the academic ability of their students as either fair or poor—an increase of 8 percent over a similar 1976 rating. Although the respondents do have something of a valid point, part of the blame for less literate college graduates must fall to the college curriculum and to the professors themselves, a conclusion bolstered by the fact that college graduates did no better on the NAEP literacy rating than did currently enrolled students with only two years of college.

While most professors would argue with, if not take umbrage at, this premise, there is an increasing body of evidence that the American professoriat isn't doing its job of educating American undergraduates. In fact, many professors simply do not teach much anymore. The average teaching load at leading universities is in the range of four to six hours per week, and only about one in twenty faculty members teaches undergraduates more than eleven hours per week. In the 1940s, professors routinely taught four or five courses per semester; that load has diminished steadily, and now they typically teach two undergraduate courses one semester and one the other. Further, with vacations and breaks, professors now tend to teach only thirty weeks a year. And, with sabbaticals and leaves, approximately one-fifth of the professors aren't teaching at all during any given semester. John Silber, president of Boston University, says of faculty, "Unless you give them light teaching loads, they won't stay around."

Professors are also often unwilling to teach freshman and sophomore classes; the courses they do teach are generally small seminars for advanced students or large lecture courses that are often overloaded with students. At research universities, for example, 29 percent of undergraduates report that all or most of their classes had more than one hundred

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students. Nor do professors tend to get involved in the tasks generally associated with college teaching—discussing academic matters with students and grading their papers. These tasks fall rather more often to untrained, poorly paid graduate students working as teaching assistants. In fact, the situation is often so bad that the 1985 Association of American Colleges report "Integrity in the College Curriculum" concluded that "the teaching assistantship is now a device for exploiting graduate students in order to relieve senior faculty from teaching undergraduates." The problem is further exacerbated because in particular disciplines, such as economics, mathematics, engineering, and science, the teaching assistants are often foreign.

Because of the professors' unwillingness to teach undergraduates, American college students are now often taught by gypsies. "Gypsy" is the academic term for part-time or temporary instructors who wander from campus to campus looking for whatever teaching positions are available. Paid as little as $1,000 to $1,500 per course, they now comprise 32 percent of all university faculties and teach, according to one estimate, more than one-third of the undergraduate courses in the country. With odd schedules and paltry salaries and without campus offices, the gypsies tend, quite understandably, to develop little commitment to the students, the college, or the other faculty.

Worse still, the undergraduate teaching that does occur, whether by professors, gypsies, or teaching assistants, is, in the words of the Carnegie Commission, "often uninspired." As Ernest Boyer of the Carnegie Commission explained: "Today the lecture method is preferred by most professors. With few exceptions, when we visited classes, the teacher stood in front of rows of chairs and talked most of the forty-five or fifty minutes. Information was presented that students often passively received. There was little opportunity for positions to be clarified or ideas challenged." None of this is lost on students. When asked in the Carnegie survey whether there were *any* professors who had had a great influence on their academic careers, only 44 percent responded positively—and the percentage was even lower at research and doctorate-granting universities. Conversely, at these same universities, well over half the students surveyed felt that most students were "treated like numbers in a book." Ironically, then, many undergraduates are likely to pass through the nation's leading universities without ever having much personal contact with or any real opportunity to learn from the very professors who have garnered for these universities their lofty reputations.

The professorial justification for minimal teaching loads is, of course, the burden of research upon which advancement and tenure are based. It is axiomatic in American higher education that teaching may be

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praised but research is rewarded. The fact is that few professors are significantly involved in research. One ballpark estimate holds that 80 percent of the research is being done by 10 percent of the faculty at 20 percent of the universities. Forty-two percent of college faculty are said to spend four hours or less weekly on research, and only thirty-two percent do research for more than ten hours per week. Fifty-five percent have never published or edited a book or monograph, and twenty-two percent have never even published in a professional journal—a startling statistic in light of the glut of academic journals. The field of sociology alone now produces more than 140 journals in the United States; and, around the world, something like a million scientific papers are published annually.

If many American professors are teaching little and doing even less valuable research, one has to wonder how they spend their time. Committee work and departmental duties are time-consuming, but even generous estimates place faculty work weeks in the range of twenty-four to thirty-four hours. The only survey that places faculty work loads at or above that of the average American worker includes categories like "Public Service" (including work "on their own as freelance consultants"), "Professional Enrichment," and "Remunerative Outside Work." More than half the faculty at American four-year private and public colleges and universities report income earned outside their home institutions.

Professors protest, of course, that any hourly tabulation of their work load misses the essence of what they do, going so far, in one case, as to compare academic life to the priesthood. Indeed, it seems that the American professoriat, at least in its own eyes, has become almost sacrosanct. In *American Professors: A National Resource Imperiled* (1986), Howard Bowen and Jack Schuster admit that, "in the academic world, the distinction between work and leisure is inevitably fuzzy"; but they also conclude that professors might do their best work while dining with friends or vacationing in Europe. It becomes increasingly difficult not to conclude that many professors do less and less work—at least for the colleges and universities at which they are tenured.

Nor are the salaries trifling. At the same time that faculty work loads have been falling, salaries have been rising. The average 1987–88 salaries for full professors at all doctoral-granting universities rose 5.4 percent to $52,950; at private doctoral-granting institutions, the rise was greater still—6.3 percent to $59,850. The average salary for faculty of all ranks, including instructors and lecturers rose 5.4 percent to $41,780 (6.2 percent to $46,960 at private universities). Further, it is estimated that fringe benefits add another 20 percent to salary packages. But even these salary figures suggest little about the truly extravagant amounts "star

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professors" receive for minimal work. In a move similar to the current hype in recruiting students, American universities have become far more interested in attracting famous names than in hiring faculty to teach students.

The professorial star system first received attention in the popular press in 1986 when the University of South Carolina, pressured by a lawsuit, revealed that Jihan el-Sadat, the widow of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, had been paid $212,000 in salary and $113,000 in expenses for teaching a class about women in Egypt once a week for three semesters. Sadat's salary, though obviously excessive, wasn't in the least bit anomalous. The university paid large sums to numerous luminaries, including newscasters James Lehrer and Robert MacNeil, who collected $37,500 each to lecture twice a semester, and Gale Sayers, a former Chicago Bear football star, who received $25,000 a semester as a consultant to the College of Education.

The University of South Carolina's President James B. Holderman defended the remunerations, saying, "I don't think there's anything unusual about it. . . . We want to move fast. We are moving fast." While such dubious practices may in fact no longer be uncommon in American higher education, it is important to note that the fast track to which Holderman referred was not that of instructional excellence but rather fund-raising. Between 1977 and 1986, the university's endowment increased from $3.9 million to $34 million—and annual *private* contributions soared from $1.9 million to $16.5 million.

Although the University of South Carolina's practices have perhaps been the most outrageous, American universities now not only routinely bring in richly paid public figures as visiting lecturers but also raid each other's regular faculty for stars. In a typical case, Rutgers lured the historian David L. Lewis with a high salary, light teaching load, and lavish travel budget. New York University included an expensive apartment on Washington Square in its successful recruitment of University of North Carolina professor of Italian Aldo Scaglioni. In the mid-1980s, George Mason University made a name of sorts for itself by hiring twenty-nine professorial stars, many at salaries more than double those of the faculty already teaching at the university. There has then already evolved in American universities an upstairs-downstairs mentality in which some academic aristocrats receive a small fortune while others clean the manor. This mentality, based on image building rather than on educational principles, leaves much of the instruction in the universities to the permanent academic underclass, the gypsies and the teaching assistants.

Now, none of this suggests that there aren't extraordinary professors in American colleges and universities—men and women dedicated to

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teaching, deeply committed to important scholarly research, and fully involved in their departments. But the evidence, both statistical and anecdotal, suggests that, as a profession, American professors do not give as much to their students, their disciplines, and their universities as professors once did. Nor do students—and parents and taxpayers who ultimately pay the salaries—receive from professors the service, the education, they should expect to receive.

The ostensible reason for the professoriat's faltering commitment is, again, "market conditions." Students and parents are not demanding quality in undergraduate instruction; university administrators and boards of trustees are not requiring accountability from professors. While these factors may be true enough, there is likely a deeper and far more disturbing answer: Professors aren't providing an excellent undergraduate education because American colleges and universities have lost their sense of mission. In *American Professors: A National Resource Imperiled,* Bowen and Schuster insist, quite correctly, that "the main duty of every institution of higher education is to place a competent faculty, and the scholarly environment they create, at the disposal of students." Not only are the faculty at many leading universities not in any sense at the disposal of students, but the curriculum the faculty has created is often a hodgepodge of unrelated courses and programs. College faculty, it seems, can agree on the number of credits necessary for graduation but on little else about what constitutes an undergraduate education.

Almost anything passes for college curricula these days, and the most appropriate metaphor for current college offerings is that of a smorgasbord. In an attempt to become attractive to all students, American colleges and universities offer more than eleven hundred different programs and majors. A core of general education requirements for all students is now more the exception than the rule. Only 34 percent of colleges require at least one year of foreign language; only 45 percent require a course in Western Civilization, and just about half require a course in philosophy or religion. Core courses have given way to "distribution requirements," a smattering of requirements in general areas (a science requirement might, for example, be fulfilled by taking courses as diverse as agriculture or health education). At many colleges, as the National Institute of Education report "Involvement in Learning" notes, students graduate as easily having taken courses like "Family Food Management" and "Automobile Ownership" as "Ethics" and "Neuropsychology." Further, this proliferation of courses and programs is not at all confined to second-rate institutions or to large state universities.

Coupled with this lack of mission is a bizarre, if not appalling, lack of

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standards. In recent years, colleges have raised admission standards both in terms of high school courses and standardized test scores. Fourteen state university systems, for instance, have raised their admissions requirements; between 1980 and 1985 the percentage of selective public universities requiring a number of years of study in English, mathematics, biological sciences, social studies, and foreign languages has risen significantly. But few American universities have any clear standards for students once they matriculate. That is, colleges and universities spend a great deal of time and money measuring students' learning before their arrival on campus but do almost nothing to measure whether they learn anything more before they graduate. Less than a quarter of American universities examine students' knowledge in their major field, and only a third generate, much less examine, *any* information about learning and educational growth. All of this leads the authors of "Integrity in the College Curriculum" to conclude: "One of the most remarkable and scandalous aspects of American higher education is the absence of traditions, practices, and methods, of institutional and social accountability."

If no one, least of all college faculties, is quite sure what American undergraduates are learning these days, what is it that students are receiving for their huge tuition payments? In a word, *diplomas*. The number of degrees awarded by American colleges and universities rose by one-third between 1971 and 1986. The Carnegie Commission report concludes that "many of the nation's colleges are more successful in credentialing than in providing a quality education for their students." Clifford Adelman presents an even harsher indictment: "Colleges and universities have generated mass confusion between credentials and education, encouraging the accumulation of chits rather than learning."

This idea that many American colleges are becoming little more than posh credentialing agencies should be positively daunting to anyone concerned about the future of American higher education. Richard Boyatzis, who has studied the nature of credentialism, says that one of the inevitable ends of such practice, regardless of the field, is "the establishment of mediocre performance standards." What then is happening on American campuses is this: Students are paying fourteen-carat prices for what is too often a gilded education. While the cost of higher education spirals upward, the quality of undergraduate education winds downward toward mediocrity.

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After Smashing the Wedgwood

W. R. CONNOR

IN OUR FAMILY, as I was growing up in a manufacturing city in central New England, there was one, and only one status symbol. It was Wedgwood china—the few pieces imported from the factory in Britain—not antiques and not a full set. Since they sat in a cabinet, which protected their Dionysiac motifs from dust, and were to the best of my recollection never used, I recognized them for what they were, not utilitarian objects, but a symbol, parts of a dream, a sign of hope for the future.

I sometimes wonder what effect those few pieces of Wedgwood had on me. Did I have them in mind when I first read Keats's apostrophe to some other Grecian pottery, his "still unravish'd bride of quietness"? Did Mr. Wedgwood's expropriation of classical models, his judicious plagiarism of the Portland Vase, his skill at bowdlerizing and marketing Dionysiac ecstasy make plausible Keats's imagined world of changeless beauty? Did the china in the cabinet induce me to continue the study of Latin, and eventually take up that of Greek, or was that simply the result of my lack of ability in more practical subjects?

As I began to read books about the Greeks and Romans, even by those reputed to be the "best" scholars, I found these books were written in a way that brought the Wedgwood to mind—flowery, elegant, "all breathing human passion far above." They, too, were imports from Britain, for we have often relied on the British to do much of the interpretation of classical civilization for us—Jowett, Gilbert Murray, and their successors down to Martin Bernal. Even in the 1950s their Greeks, like the soul of Matthew Arnold's Sophocles, "business could not make dull, nor passion wild." They "saw life steadily and saw it whole." Their bodies grew healthy under the Greek sun—no melanomas under that sky; their minds ranged freely through the world of ideas; they lived in a society of special vitality and creativity, the Greek polis, whose culminating

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expression was Athens, a city that, in Pericles' words, achieved the "love of wisdom without softness," at least as long as its democracy retained balance and restraint. Overseas their rule brought order, prosperity, stability, and Attic civilization wherever their naval power reached. Along the way these men—there was little mention of the women—established something called "Western Civilization," an acquaintance with which was the essential mark of a liberal education. We were still in the afterglow of Poe's "glory that was Greece"—the great Victorian synthesis of classical studies, so well illuminated by Frank M. Turner in *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain*. We could still admire, unabashedly, the Parthenon, poetry like "that strangest, saddest, sweetest song" of Euripides, the Greek Enlightenment, Athenian democracy, and, of course, the Periclean Funeral Oration. Whatever disagreements might trouble the scholars, the popular consensus prevailed that the Greeks, for a while, had achieved a balanced order, and taught a set of unchanging lessons as applicable in our age as in theirs.

Classical scholars have broken so much Wedgwood since then that there is little left. The old adulation and emulation of the Greeks have been abandoned and a greater critical distance established between the modern scholar and the ancient subject, a distance that makes it possible to see more clearly the failures and the difficulties of Greek civilization, especially those that affected women, foreigners, slaves—the marginalized members of society. Classicists have achieved a more critical perspective on Athenian democracy, social organization, and foreign policy. Indeed the new critical distance has shattered the Victorian synthesis, discrediting it with rhetorical flair and hyperbole. In its place has emerged a variety of new approaches to classical antiquity. One of these, which might be called the "adversarial mode," has been especially prominent, as can be seen by the following pastiche of quotations drawn from works written in the last few decades by highly regarded classical scholars. The comments are once again largely imports to this country, especially from Britain, but American scholars have adopted and imitated them with little hesitation.

In the new view, Athens's prominence during the fifth century B.C., despite a certain popularity among the lower classes, amounted "more and more to a tremendous land-grab, carried out and protected by Athenian naval power for the benefit of Athenian citizens of all classes." Athenian imperialism reflected in an extreme form characteristic qualities of the Greeks—"high spirits, contentiousness, *philotimia*, intemperance, . . . bellicosity, litigiousness." Its culmination in the great war between Athens and the Peloponnesians has led to the common characterization of Greek culture as a "War Culture." Its principal texts, including Homer, Herodotus, and Thucydides "yield up the secret of a joint partnership in a literary enterprise, one which proved decisive in

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placing organised warfare at the heart of the European value system." The citizens of Athens were unembarrassed by the open expression of the claims of naked power, as another scholar has emphasized:

> Even the most openly brutal book of our time, *Mein Kampf*, is based on some mystical faith in the destiny of Germany and its significance. But Cleon and Diodotus at Athens and Euphemos before the Sicilians, or the Athenian envoys at Sparta, speak openly of the state's imperialism and its cruelty, greed and aggressiveness, merely claiming for all these qualities the sanction of human behavior at any time.

The Athenian economy is now frequently said to have been based on the brutal treatment of its overseas subjects, and the regular exploitation of slaves in Attica. The political life of the city "was based upon the exclusion of women, just as upon the exclusion of foreigners and slaves." Indeed, "Civilization in Periclean Athens was a male affair. Women were a voiceless species," apparently meekly accepting their exclusion from the polis and their life as "virtual prisoners . . . locked within the squalid, dark and damp [*sic*] confines of . . . mud-brick houses." The citizen males, on the other hand, "spent their leisure hours loitering about grand public spaces within sight of marble or stone buildings" or in the assembly where they ratified Pericles' "demarcation of the Athenian 'master race' " through the Citizenship Law of 451 B.C. (actually a law requiring claimants of citizenship to show Attic ancestry in both the father's and the mother's line).

Of course, Pericles' own position was insecure, because of the Athenians' "paranoia about the domination of democratic institutions by individuals." The city was so intolerant of divergent opinion that for thirty years it "witnessed a series of heresy trials. . . . [T]he victims included most of the leaders of progressive thought at Athens—Anaxagoras, Diagoras, Socrates, almost certainly Protagoras also, and possibly Euripides. . . . [T]he Great Age of Greek Enlightenment was also, like our own time, an Age of Persecution—banishing of scholars, blinkering of thought and even . . . burning of books."

This characterization of classical Athens by the greatest British Hellenist of this century, E. R. Dodds, has been shown to be radically flawed. Yet similar feelings of disillusionment are evident in much recent scholarship on Classical Athens. The old claim of universal significance for the literature of the period is commonly replaced by the suggestion that classical literature, especially Greek tragedy, is best understood as a reflection of situations specific to that culture or as pure theatricality—sometimes with results that are, intentionally or not, "close to comic opera." The texts are understandably remote from the modern reader, since in our everyday lives "we do not expect to meet

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Sphinxes, kill fathers, marry mothers, etc." Greek art and architecture fare little better: the Parthenon has been called the "Western world's biggest cultural cliché"—a building best understood, we are now told, as a symbol of imperial grandeur and exploitation.

Even the idea of the polis itself, the distinctively Greek form of social and political organization, has been challenged as a modern construct without adequate justification in ancient texts or practice. The political life of Athens has, in the words of one recent scholar, been commonly characterized as "mob rule, or the hollow creation of a slave-owning elite or, at best, as admirable but outmoded."

Nowhere, however, is the shift from older to newer patterns of scholarship more conspicuous than in the treatment of Pericles and of the funeral oration Thucydides ascribed to him. In the years following World War II, German scholars encouraged a radical reassessment of Pericles and his "Führertum." He came to be seen as the developer of an ideology resembling modern totalitarianism, in which Athens demanded "a fanatical, irrational devotion" from its citizens. The culminating expression of that ideology was, of course, precisely the text once so much admired by the lovers of Wedgwood, the Periclean Funeral Oration. This speech has now come to be read as the expression of a "Machtidee" and in more recent Continental scholarship as one of the "charms of narcissism," "an expression of the official ideology, [that] imposed schemata that no Athenian was able to escape," or as "part of the war machine against Sparta." Since Socrates may also have subscribed to similar notions about the relation of citizen to community, we must recognize the "possibility that there is . . . a line of descent from the paternalism of the historical Socrates to the exacting and even totalitarian view of the state which Plato and Thucydides [express]." If this is correct, there is a direct connection from fifth-century Athens, through Plato, to modern totalitarianism.

Surely we have gained a great deal by abandoning the old rhetoric about seeing life steadily and seeing it whole, and about glories that were Greece and grandeurs that were Rome. Both the Greeks and the Romans turned out to have much more to say to us once we stopped claiming they were perfect and started trying to understand *why* they were the way they were. Yet if we have done well to break the Wedgwood, now that most of it has gone, we must ask what should be put in its place? The adversarial mode has proved highly effective in discrediting the old synthesis, but for three reasons is much less likely to provide a new alternative.

First, the adversarial mode feeds on hyperbole even at the expense of accuracy. Most of the statements in the pastiche above can be shown to be misleading or just plain wrong. Many of them have been recently

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challenged, especially by younger American scholars. Second, the adversarial mode creates a vacuum into which move those who are eager to use classical texts to advance a political or social cause. If some classicists trivialize or devalue their material, no wonder the public is confused and easily misled. Third, and perhaps most important, the adversarial mode fails to provide an adequate rationale and sense of purpose for those who profess the classics. It substitutes a purely negative task, the removal of cant and adulation, for the effort to develop a positive sense of what the Greek and Latin classics can contribute to education today.

This can perhaps best be seen by looking more closely at the messages about the rationale for the study of classical Greek texts implicit in the pastiche of quotations cited earlier in this essay. Perhaps we can use some literary theory to help us. What would happen if we deconstructed the account of classical Athens that I have just constructed from various quotes and summaries? Let us enjoy a brief moment of narratological *jouissance* as we examine the intertextuality of this discourse. Surely it is not, as a reader unversed in literary theory might rashly assume, a prosaic historical account. Rather, under the surface illusion of a narrative mimesis of a textbook on Greek cultural history is a sub-text drawn from mythology, whose significance we can understand by a sophisticated reading.

The society depicted, called in the surface text "Fifth Century Athens," is ruled by a leader of totalitarian bent, who imposes his will on his undeviating followers. They in turn have brought much of the universe into subjection. As the dictator says, "The visible field of action has two parts: land and sea. In the whole of one of these you are completely supreme, not merely as far as you use it at present, but also to what further extent you may think fit. So that although you may think it a great privation to lose the use of your land and houses, still you must see that this power is something widely different" (Pericles in Thucydides 2. 62).

"This power is something widely different." What kind of power is it then? Even the most naive critic will know that "the visible field of action" does not consist of only *two* parts. In addition to the binary opposition of land and sea, there is of course the space of the heavens, of the sun and the moon, and more relevantly of the stars. The discourse attempts to close this third space, but in attempting to treat all as the *différence* between earth and sea it calls attention to the exclusion of the heavens. By deconstructing the text the hermeneutically informed critic opens up the heavenly space for a new discourse and can thereby recognize that the true war in this war culture is not war on land or sea, as the surface text suggests, but war in "another galaxy, in another

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time. . . ." And the land is not the real and therefore unknowable city of Athens but a remote Evil Empire. The battles and warfare of which we read are then Star Wars, as the mythic sub-text affirms. Pericles is Darth Vader, Dark Lord of the Sith, and the critics who adopt the adversarial mode are the Rebel Alliance, fighting bravely to prevent the domination of the Death Star.

Central Casting has assigned these critics roles as beleaguered heroes, fighters against this Evil Empire. They are, as age and gender cast them, the Luke Skywalker, the Princess Leia, the Obi-wan Kenobi of our spaceship classic. Some who have joined the remarkable computer revolution in classical studies may win the role of R2D2. But all can claim to be fighting darkness and evil. May the force be with them!

What a satisfying—indeed self-satisfied—sub-text this is! How wonderful to be cast as the heroic if beleaguered protectors of the Good in the cosmic battles of a Manichean universe. And how typical of the humanities in the late twentieth century to identify the Evil Empire with the texts classicists once said they "professed."

The new adversarial mode is, of course, much in fashion in the humanities. As Mark Stevens has pointed out, scholars now commonly assert cultural primacy over the subjects they study. "The authority once reserved for the artist passes to the scholar [who] . . . in showing himself aware of the constraints of history, now seems to stand above time." By emphasizing the flaws, failures, and pettiness of the subject matter, critics exalt themselves as the true arbiters of cultural value. Our lighthearted foray into deconstruction, in other words, underlines an important shift in the critical distance between scholar and subject matter. The new adversarial mode abandons the old emulation of the classics and its elimination of critical distance. In its place it substitutes an exaltation of the remote critic over the benighted text. This critical distance provides a specious alternative to the rationale of the old Wedgwoodian approach. Some classicists argue that the Greeks need to be studied because they shaped Western civilization—for the worse. In this view people should read Homer because he alerts us to the extent to which all Western culture is a war culture, or study Aeschylus to expose the fact that his plays legitimize misogyny, or analyze Thucydides and Plato to reveal the underlying model for modern authoritarian regimes, and so on.

In this view classical scholarship becomes a series of chapters in the history of error, and classical studies are justified because they reveal the origin of the violence, exploitation, repression, sexism, imperialism, and totalitarianism that characterize Western civilization. This is of course simply patching the old Wedgwood together and then turning it upside down.

"The Greeks and Us," a prophetic essay by W. H. Auden published

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in 1948, pointed to an alternative approach that has proved crucial to classical studies in the last forty years. Auden wrote:

> If there is any reaction to the Greeks which may be called typical of our age as compared with preceding times, it is, I think, a feeling that they were very odd people indeed, so much so that when we come across something they wrote which seems similar to our way of thinking, we immediately suspect that we have misunderstood the passage. It is the unlikeness of the Greeks to ourselves, the gulf between the kind of assumptions they made, the kind of questions they asked and our own that strikes us more than anything else.

By following Auden we have been able to replace the old Wedgwood with something new—not the universal modern plastic nor biodegradable paper, nor a facsimile of contemporary clichés and causes, but with the rough textures and authentic colors of the wares of remote tribes and peoples. Now classicists can partake of the raw and the cooked, become observers of the rituals of remote tribes, visit in the company of our anthropological colleagues' acephalous societies, segmentary states, and the survivals of stone age hunting rituals.

Despite the persistence of old prejudices against the social sciences, anthropological approaches are transforming classical studies at every level, not least by helping classicists resist the tendency to domesticate Greek texts and Greek culture—to fit them into the categories of the modernized world. The battle for the acceptance of anthropological approaches is still being waged, and the benefits are only beginning to be gained. Yet perhaps it is not premature to note a potential danger—exoticism. We need to believe in the purity of the past. If we cannot have Greeks who were paradigms for us, we will at least have them unsullied by the crassness of our own world. We *want* the Greeks to be different from us. They become thereby exotic, a strange mixture of dark and light, part of a mandala we can contemplate but never adequately comprehend. Just as the old romantic image of the Greeks presented them as static objects of perfection, the new and more sophisticated understanding may leave them as inhabitants of a remote world, with its own concerns and issues perhaps, but quite detached from us. The modern student of the classical Greeks may enjoy contemplating the distinctiveness of their ways, but never join in their rituals or debates.

Yet it is in debate that one is most likely to find the necessary critical distance between the contemporary world and the ancient texts. The Wedgwood approach allowed only emulation and identification; the adversarial approach exalts the critic over the artist; the anthropological approach imposes the detached stance of the ethnographic observer. But debate requires both close engagement and deliberate distance, a respect for difference and a sense that what the other side says matters. It flourishes when the issues are serious ones—the relation between the

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community and the individual, the power and the limits of reason, the role of women, the fragility of goodness, the irony of history, the understanding of loss and failure.

Greek literature engages precisely such issues, the life and death issues. Of course, as Auden pointed out, some of the Greek questions may turn out to have been incorrectly put, and some of their answers wrong. But rarely has any literature dealt so directly and uncompromisingly with concerns that transcend the boundaries of the culture and that provoke such perennial debate. The Greeks demand to be heard, yet we classicists sometimes hesitate to engage with them, lest we seem to idealize them or neglect the limits and exclusions in their thought and practice. One hears, for example, the argument that since the Greeks commonly excluded women from political power, one devalues women by studying that culture or reading its texts. Yet, as feminist scholars in classics have repeatedly shown, a careful study of ancient Greek civilization is an especially productive way of making problematical the relation between the sexes, and texts such as Sappho, Aristophanes' *Lysistrata,* and Plato's *Republic* provide a rich, imaginative vocabulary for thinking about the long struggle for sexual equality.

No one need claim Athens was perfect or forget the abuses or problems in that society—or our own. Thucydides clearly did not think that Athens was perfect; he knew something was wrong and challenged his readers to analyze it. His Pericles, moreover, is carefully represented as avoiding the complacent, self-congratulatory bombast to which the epideictic genre was prone. The Periclean Funeral Oration needs to be read as part of the Greeks' effort to think out the relationship between citizen and society. Far from imposing some quasi-totalitarian ideology on its readers, it opens up for debate fundamental questions about the nature of the state and the obligations of the citizen.

If that assessment is correct, then it is also likely that, as Basil Gildersleeve pointed out in his presidential address to the American Philological Association more than one hundred years ago, that "some phases of American life enable us to understand the ancients better than some contemporaries on the other side can do." Topics of special concern to North Americans—pluralism, the distortion of political discourse, the tension between rich and poor, and the relationships among divergent cultures—open up important issues in classical studies, as do countless other personal and civic concerns.

Finally, good debate awakens the imagination. Engagement with Greek and Latin texts provides a counterforce against what James Cox has called the "contraction of the imaginative orbit" that stifles students and impoverishes intellectual life. From such debate can come what Gibbon called "the habit of alternatively becoming a Greek or a Roman,

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a disciple of Zeno or of Epicurus," a habit "admirably adapted to develop the rare power of going back to simple ideas of seizing and developing first principles."

The claim that the Greek and Latin classics have on our education and our cultural life is not based on their perfection or the prerogatives of class or status, but on the imaginative power of the culture—Achilles and Priam at the end of the *Iliad*, Phaeacia, the escape to Cloudcookoo land, the procession of the Eumenides, the great sea of beauty in the *Symposium*, worlds without slavery, republics in which women were treated exactly as men, societies where it might be possible "to cultivate refinement without extravagance and knowledge without softness," and, simplest and profoundest of all, the paradox of freedom in community.

These were for them imagined possibilities, not the realities of a society still bound by slavery, war, sexism, and the struggle for self-aggrandizement. Utopian imaginings. Precisely—the imagination of the Greeks and their ability to sustain and enrich the imagination of those who take them seriously have given them the power to transform individuals and societies. We study the Greeks not because they were perfect models that must be imitated, not because they are the source either of the perfection or of the problems of Western civilization, not because they are quaint or exotic, but because they challenge us to imagine, to argue, to become more fully conscious, and to think what might otherwise be unthinkable. That is still, I believe, our best hope for the future.

Sidney Hook

1902–1989

Contributor, THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

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Poems

SUSAN REA

Volcanoes

(for Demian)

At three, you already know that Mauna Loa
is the largest volcano on earth,
that cinder cones and shields
are the fundamental volcanic shapes,
that the caved-in summit
of Mt. Mazama is called a caldera.
At three, you are not satisfied with this.
You want me to tell you how
the earth can turn against us.

Together we watch on film the night-time sky
bursting with flame over Mt. Stromboli.
Fire fountains, burgeoning out of the hills,
the earth sending up ancient messages.
"How can it be," you ask me,
"beautiful and dangerous?"
Outside you study the soft green
of summer underfoot as though you saw,
beneath the bowed head of the arbutus,
warning, glowing a dull red.

You think that I saw dinosaurs in childhood,
speak all languages, will tell you
everything. I can't say what was planted

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in these fields that grow black rock.
I watch you tame the fire
with a three-year-old's joke,
keeping in the yard a pet volcano
that spouts honeydew: Mt. St. Melons.
The volcanoes you draw are delicate
blue triangles, thin blue lines
rising out of them, floating off the paper.

We read how in Iceland men build
greenhouses on volcanic fields,
mow grass in winter. Vision alters
what is seen—that is all I can tell you.
Never surrender your fine, particular eye.
Somewhere a man in his glass house,
inside the heart of a blizzard, harvests roses.

Portrait of Aunt Ellen

The photographer has made an error.
The sepia parlor, with its potted ferns,
is superimposed upon the outside of the farmhouse.
One fern frond bores a hole
through the eaves of the front porch.

Only the child is in sharp focus,
plump in her white lace dress
against the patterned parlor wall
her shoes buckled over white stockings,
an incredible white bow the size of a fist
above each ear.

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It's hard to tell what lies
on her left, a streak of light so strong
it has broken through both pictures,
fading the flowered parlor rug
and painting out half the boards
on the house's west wall
so that it resembles a fence
which has failed to contain this room.

The child looks too directly
into the camera, as if to pretend
she doesn't see the light. Her pose—
shoulders back, rigidly squared off—
is not a little girl's,
and the resolutely focused eyes
are ancient and intent.

You want to tell her not to worry:
she will never be more than three years old.
In a few more days
she'll eat green apples and die,
this oval portrait what will remain
of her, and of the black dog
that stands beside her, bow-legged, edgy,
certain there will soon be something to bark at.

✪ SUSAN REA has poems forthcoming in the *Laurel Review*, *Spectrum*, and *Confrontation*.

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Who Read John Locke?

Words and Acts in the American Revolution

OSCAR AND LILIAN HANDLIN

HISTORIANS, LIKE OTHER PEOPLE WHO WRITE or who aspire to write, exaggerate the importance of the word in transforming the world. In imagination, polished sentences speed forth, find their targets, and consequences follow. The linkage between words and acts rewards the intellectuals just as it rewards the beneficiaries of their advice. Perhaps the writers expect thus to extend their own influence over events or perhaps events justify their efforts. Faith in the transforming power of the word is essential. Otherwise why strive to get the sentences well crafted?

In a long tradition, masters of the word through the centuries sought to catch the king's ear. Every David had his Nathan, every Ahab his Elijah, every Louis XIV an aspiring Colbert, all of them seeking to validate their visions by proximity to power.

The relationship in modern times is no longer one-to-one, personal and oral. In complex political systems, print serves as a medium for decisions involving legislators, judges, and bureaucrats, as well as ministers and presidents. Yet the efforts at persuasion persist, in the hope that a cogently argued book will not only affect the course of events, but will also demonstrate its correctness by the test of practice.

The putative connection of words and acts extends to many areas of social experience, but it has been particularly significant in efforts to understand political change; and nowhere more so than in interpretation of the American Revolution. The debate over colonial rights in the British Empire after 1763 led into a long war and developed an independent political system; the controversy also produced such intellectual monuments as the Declaration of Independence and the state and federal constitutions. The parties to the dispute employed both

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practical and theoretical weapons: on the one hand, political and military measures; on the other, exploration of concepts such as *free and equal, natural rights,* and *social contract,* long familiar to the readers of learned books. But the relationship between text and practical act is far from clear. Did one cause the other? Did clauses from the printed page move people to action; or were they rhetorical cloaks that covered steps taken for other reasons; or did some happy but fortuitous junction bring words and acts together?

Questions about the sources compound the difficulty. The Revolution was American; but books written in France, Switzerland, Holland, and England stocked the intellectual armory of the colonists. The links between the words written elsewhere and the events across the Atlantic are by no means clear.

Historians have thus commonly ascribed many revolutionary ideas and sometimes even actions to the influence of John Locke, without troubling to investigate the channels of transmission. Even the most intelligent politicians were not philosophers, not now and not in the eighteenth century; and merchants, farmers, artisans, and other people were no more given to acting from intellectual impulses then than now. How did the ideas of such writers as Locke get transformed into action?

These questions raise the general historiographic problems of tracing the intellectual influence of earlier works upon later ones. To establish the actual affiliation between one thinker and another calls for a probe of demonstrable linkages; and often also for a difficult evaluation of negative evidence when imputed influence left no signs where it should have.

All of these questions converge in John Locke—often referred to as the philosopher of the American Revolution and credited with supplying Americans the critical concepts of social contract, natural rights, men born free and equal. Charles and Mary Beard's *Rise of American Civilization* (1930) expressed accepted opinion that was scarcely challenged in the subsequent half century. Americans in the 1770s, they wrote, "had textbooks of revolution"—above all in John Locke's writings. "In the highways and byways," the right to change government "gathered from the writings of John Locke" and "became the chief topic of conversation among colonists," so that the Declaration of Independence derived naturally from those writings. As a matter of course, back then, Merle Curti wrote (1937): "No one has seriously questioned the great influence of John Locke on American thought during the latter part of the eighteenth century." The leading revolutionists quoted him reverently: "Franklin, Hamilton, and Jefferson read and praised him."

More recent serious, scholarly monographs make the same point. An

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account of colonial society on the eve of the Revolution thus explained that Locke's *Of Civil Government* "spoke the vernacular of middle class England; its style was homely, its tone moral and pragmatic, its language sprinkled liberally with commercial idioms. Its picture of a balanced Newtonian universe implied that natural laws were perfect and among those the labor theory of value and the idea of a social contract." John Locke "captured the American mind." His central propositions became dogma, committed to memory by every schoolboy. His theory of the social contract, well suited to the English temperament, "had wide currency in America."

So, too, an otherwise excellent study of the loyalists referred to the "qualities of elegance, delicacy and boldness" in the *Two Treatises of Government* (1690) in accounting for Locke's "immense popularity" in the colonies. Above all, Carl Becker's *Declaration of Independence* (1922), from which many errors flowed, announced: "The Declaration, in its form, in its phraseology, follows closely certain sentences in Locke's second treatise on government."

Yet a careful reading of the *Two Treatises* leads to the inescapable conclusion that it was not likely that any among the founding fathers had read this bedrock of American political theory. The style alone narrowed to the vanishing point the possibility that the people active in the resistance against Britain would have plodded through Locke's arguments. If the *Two Treatises* exerted any influence upon the revolutionary generation, it could only be as a result of not having been read.

Some eighteenth-century Americans did know John Locke, read him carefully, and understood him. However, his reputation in the colonies rested not on the treatises on government but rather on his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1693), which transformed traditional epistemology, and on his letters on education.

We know that some colonists read and understood these works because we know how they meshed in with the thinking of those few who grappled with them seriously, as did Jonathan Edwards, Cotton Mather, and Samuel Johnson. One of the few allusions to Locke in John Adams's *Diary and Autobiography* noted (1758) that Peter Chardon had referred to "Locks Conduct of the Understanding"; and it perhaps reflected Adams's unfamiliarity that he then and later misspelled the author's name. Such evidence, however, provides assurance that some Americans knew the *Essay* and its offshoots in religion and education.

But the treatises on government were something else again. Locke explained that his second treatise set forth the true principles of government. But before the second treatise came the first, composed at a somewhat different time, but still an integral part of *Of Government*.

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Its stated purpose was to overthrow Sir Robert Filmer's arguments in favor of absolute monarchy by divine right, arguments resting on the ground that no man was born completely free. To refute Sir Robert, Locke adopted the same intellectual framework and much the same language as his antagonist, although heavily spiced with sarcastic commentary. Filmer's work bore the title *Patriarcha*, and Locke's first treatise accordingly discussed such aspects of paternal and regal power as whether Adams's title to sovereignty over his posterity emanated from creation, from God's donation, from the subjection of Eve, or from the nature of fatherhood. The argument also probed seriously Noah's relation to his offspring; for example, did he have children after the flood? Or were all humans descendants of those who entered the ark? Had Adam died before Eve, would his heir have sovereign power over her? Granted the commandment to honor thy father, what was the obligation of the son whose father failed to honor his grandfather? The whole discussion of the first treatise rested on acceptance of the literal accuracy of the Bible—as, for instance, in the calm assertion that Adam lived above nine hundred years, or in the details of Old Testament genealogy in which Abimelech, Saul, David, Jonathan, and Solomon figured prominently, to say nothing of Jephthah and the Ammonites.

It is not plausible that the founding fathers, products of the Enlightenment as they were, should have taken to those pages—certainly not Jefferson, who noted with approval that Bolingbroke had long questioned the authenticity of the Bible, and who advised (1787), "Read the Bible, then, as you would read Livy or Tacitus," as historical literature, not as sacred text.

Perhaps the American actors in the Revolutionary drama simply skipped the first treatise and advanced to the second, which dealt with the true principles of government. Perhaps—although there, too, the religious assumptions remain deep and the style opaque, the argument profoundly incoherent, not a line in it that children were likely to lisp, however rigorous the discipline in their schools—not even the analysis of whether an infant king became the subject of his mother.

There is no proof, however, that the colonists read even the second treatise. Locke wrote at length about two subjects that should have concerned Americans; yet as far as the record shows, his views never became subjects for conversation in the lanes of Boston or Philadelphia, or even grist for debaters, pamphleteers, and journalists.

The *Two Treatises of Government* said a good deal about the derivation of the right to property in labor and its place in fundamental law, much of it critical to Locke's argument and apposite to issues that also troubled the revolutionary generation—the relation to representa-

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tion and to suffrage, for instance. Yet the long debates on these issues in the constitutional conventions, federal and state, almost never mentioned Locke. One exception, the reaction of the town of Northampton to the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, accurately cited Locke on "Parental Power" to justify the exclusion of minors, but erred in a vague reference to him on liberty in arguing against the property qualification for voting in the election of representatives, a position far from his. Apart from that, silence.

The revolutionaries also failed to draw upon Locke's thought on slavery, another problem much on their minds. The *Two Treatises* devoted a whole chapter to the subject, outlining the circumstances that made bondage legitimate but also denying that the status could descend from one generation to another—a proposition that, had he known it, certainly ought to have interested Jefferson, who hoped for the elimination of the institution with time. Neither he nor any other colonist referred to the work in this connection.

Had Locke's influence been as deep as supposed, it would surely have left traces in the abundant correspondence of the period, in the commonplace books the colonists compiled, and in the marginalia that commented on their reading. Such evidence, too, requires critical examination: many a youth claimed to have read what he had only leafed through, and not every reading resulted in understanding. Making all such allowances, a search of papers of the key figures of the revolutionary generation yielded surprisingly meager fruits.

We know that Thomas Jefferson included Locke in his trinity of immortals, along with Newton and Bacon, so that it hardly seems plausible that his familiarity with the *Two Treatises* would leave no imprint in the surviving documents, for other writers did leave their marks. In a letter to John Adams (1813), Jefferson noted that he had read Bolingbroke fifty years before "and not less than five times since," and, surely enough, extracts appear in the notebooks. Long passages from Montesquieu and Burlamaqui also crop up there. Why then does no scrap of paper record Jefferson's acquaintance with the *Two Treatises*? Dumas Malone believed that "the simplest explanation of his failure to copy much from Locke in his student notebooks is that he was familiar with his most important ideas already." Having accepted the doctrine of natural rights, Jefferson, by this interpretation, took it for granted thereafter. Carl Becker had already advanced that suggestion even more extravagantly. Jefferson, "having read Locke's treatise, was so taken with it that he read it again, and still again, so that afterwards its very phrases reappear in his own writing." Jefferson, therefore, "found well expressed in Locke, the ideas he put into the Declaration of Independence."

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Not a scrap of evidence supports this pure assertion that, however, supplies an all-purpose excuse for puzzling omissions. The existence of notes would prove Jefferson's familiarity with the ideas quoted; their absence, by demonstrating that he had no need of them, proves even greater familiarity.

For whatever reason, the commonplace book makes only a passing reference to Locke on Christianity and on the subject of elective monarchy, topics that are hardly relevant in either case to the Declaration. Jefferson lived a long time after 1776, and continued to buy some Locke into the nineteenth century, but uncertainty clouds the question of what he owned when. Certainly, his library contained Filmer's essays—and attached to them a note that Locke had responded to in the *Two Treatises*. But that work, if Jefferson ever owned it, was not among the books given to the Library of Congress—which is not evidence of anything, for he did possess a copy of *The Complete Works* (acquired, however, well after 1776); and the *Two Treatises* may have been lost or loaned, or burned in the fire of 1770; and even if owned, it may not have been studied, certainly not over and over again, unless we are credulous enough to believe that the copy, so heavily read, crumbled and was discarded.

John Adams, also well read, also on the scene at the composition of the Declaration, yields equally blank evidence. In 1760, he mused that he *should* be paying attention to various authors, among them Locke. But he never demonstrated that he translated those musings into action. In the draft of an essay on education (1763), Adams summarily dismissed the treatises of Milton and Locke (1693) as "useless in this time and in this place." The marginalia in which Adams expressed attitudes to books he read reveal no commitment to Locke. Indeed, an oblique comment on Rousseau's *Discours* shows shaky knowledge. Impatient with Condorcet's reference to the rights of man, "to which Locke gave the prestige of his name," Adams snapped, "I do not believe that he ever read Sidney or Locke"—thereby revealing his own uncertain command of at least Locke. In reading Frederick's correspondence with Voltaire, Adams noted that the discussion of matter was stolen from Locke and noted also "How accurate!" of the king's slighting remark that Philadelphia had received its laws from Locke (1799). Other than that, no record of Locke. All of which proves little except in the negative.

The case of James Wilson, among the most learned of the founding fathers, also reveals the pitfalls of taking too much for granted. To Carl Becker, the pamphlet on the legislative authority of the British Parliament sounded "as if Wilson were making a summary of Locke. No doubt he was." No doubt? More than doubt! Certainty that he was not. Insofar as any source influenced Wilson, it was Burlamaqui, extracts from whose

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writings also appeared in Jefferson's commonplace book. Becker was not aware that Wilson later would begin his lectures on law by attacking Locke's writings for strengthening skepticism, for posing a threat to law, and for undermining true liberty, reasons for which Wilson preferred the concept of consent formulated by Richard Hooker. And there are no grounds for supposing Wilson viewed Locke any kindlier earlier than later.

A few colonists had read the *Two Treatises*, but not all with the expected result. James Otis had done so and used the concept of consent to bludgeon British policy, drawing upon Locke to set limits to the authority of king and parliament. Otis may also have supplied the not-quite-accurate reference to Locke used by the Massachusetts House in its controversy with the lieutenant governor (1770). Peter Van Schaack, on the other hand, having laboriously made his way through the *Two Treatises*, worried (1776) lest the challenge to the social contract, unless carefully limited, lead to anarchy. He thereupon became a loyalist, for he could not concede that the errors of the British ministers were grave enough to dissolve the government; "and as long as the society lasts, the power that every individual gave the society when he entered into it, can never revert to the individuals again, but will always remain in the community," a fair reading of Locke's concluding chapter. And Thomas Hutchinson querulously argued that colonists who talked loudly about the right of revolution had not read Locke closely. A quotation detached from its context did not support the claim that individuals could disobey an arbitrary government with impunity. The *Second Treatise* only permitted the whole body of the people, acting nearly in unison on the basis of manifest evidence of a design against liberty, to renounce their allegiance to a ruler, a situation that did not apply, the lieutenant governor argued, to Massachusetts in his day.

A careful reading of *Of Government*, with its insistence on the religious duty to obey magistrates, with its dread of any claim to a permanent right of individual secession, and with its argument for the supremacy of the legislative—that is, of the King in Parliament—endows the understanding of Van Schaack and Hutchinson with at least as much validity as that of Otis. Locke, after all, conceded wide latitude to the royal prerogative even "against the direct Letter of the Law, for the Publick good." Indeed, Otis himself may soon have abandoned the natural rights position.

More usually, the colonists—when they did so at all—made glancing allusions to the notable figures from the Enlightenment pantheon. In pamphlet after pamphlet, American writers cited Locke on natural rights and on the social and governmental contract. But to what did such

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citations amount? James Otis, in *The Rights of the British Colonies* (1764), for instance, after raising the questions of the origins of civil government, asserted: "Those who want a full answer to them may consult Mr. Locke's discourses on government, M. De Vattel's law of nature and nations, and their own consciences." In Otis's case, we know his familiarity with Locke from other places. More usually we have no such assurance.

In these glancing allusions, the colonists reached for the support of respectable authority, but showed no familiarity with the works cited, only with the names of the authors. Otis's *Vindication* (1765) jumbled references to Locke, Coke, and Blackstone. Bursting with pride, John Adams declared that the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 was "Locke, Sidney and Rousseau and De Mably reduced to practice." John Adams (1760), Jonathan Mayhew (1766), Josiah Quincy (1774), John Dickinson, Daniel Dulany, and others spun off chains of names—Sidney, Milton, Locke, Newton, Bacon, Hoadley, Gordon, Lord Summers—evidence only of a desire to convey conviction. Similar lists would later appear regularly in advice to young men aiming for careers in law or politics, with Locke more often alluded to for the *Essay* and *Conduct* than for the *Treatises*. In his draft for an autobiography, John Adams recalled a talk with Oxenbridge Thacher, Jr. (1758), in the course of which they "had Clark and Leibnitz, Descartes, Malebranche and Locke, Baxter, Bolingbroke and Berkeley, with many others on the Carpet, and Fate, foreknowledge, Eternity, Immensity, Infinity, Matter and Spirit, Essense and attribute, Vacuum and plenum, Space, and duration, Subjects which neither of us understood."

It is not enough in accounting for the disparity between reputation and actuality to recall that the clutch for validation is characteristic of all polemics. Nor is it enough to assert that Locke's name, the title of the treatises and some version of the ideas were "in the air" or part of the "climate of ideas," or transferred from him to the colonists by intellectual osmosis, or handed over like borrowed coins.

Why these ideas? Why in the colonies? Why then? Whence? To those questions we must supply a different answer.

Later in life, John Adams recalled that he had read Harrington, Sidney, Hobbes, Nedham, and Locke, "but with very little Application to any particular views" until the debates in the Continental Congress stirred his thoughts. The spark of experience then enlivened memory, and he rummaged about in recollections of past reading or of titles encountered for hooks on which to hang his arguments.

So, too, Thomas Jefferson left evidence that he read some of Locke's writing and thought seriously about it in scraps of notes about religion

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(1776). He may have been worrying about the Virginia Declaration of Rights, section 16, which stated that all men were "equally entitled to the free exercise of religion"; and that concern may later have influenced his work on the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom. Jefferson's notes on Locke's essays on tolerance (1667, 1690) commented adversely against the denial there of toleration to those, like atheists and Catholics, who entertained opinions contrary to the moral rules necessary to preserve society, and then argued against that position. Jefferson stressed the individual's right of conscience, while Locke focused on the utilitarian question of the extent to which a prudent ruler might exact obedience from his subjects. The two positions differed, but here also the ideas from the book meshed with a problem the political man faced.

Others also made respectful allusions to Locke on toleration, although not always accurately. In arguing that Article 3 of the Massachusetts Constitution inadequately separated church and state, some townspeople thus alluded to "Locke, Milton, and several other writers of the first character," but also without awareness that Locke did not go as far as they wished and expressly excluded atheists and Catholics from the scope of his tolerance.

In reflecting on his own work on the Declaration, Jefferson perceptively explained that he had not aimed at originality of principles, nor yet did he copy from any particular previous writing. The Declaration aimed "to place before mankind the common sense of the subject" by "an expression of the American mind." All its authority rested on "the harmonizing sentiments of the day, whether expressed in conversation, in letters, printed essays, or the elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney &c."

Examination of the actual use of the great phrases—*consent of the governed, born free and equal, inalienable rights*—reveals the danger of juxtaposing arguments advanced in colonial pamphlets and petitions with selections from English theoretical works.

In November 1772 the Boston meeting ordered the circulation to other Massachusetts towns of the record of its votes and proceedings in the course of a conflict with the lieutenant governor. The statement of rights and grievances, which tested the waters of the events still to come, seemed to a competent historian "based directly on John Locke's *Second Treatise*." And indeed the document explicitly cited the *Letters on Toleration* and in footnotes twice alluded to the *Second Treatise*, although less explicitly. These circumstances validate the use of this case as a test of the issue of influence.

The town objected to a move pregnant with fatal evils—the payment of stipends to judges directly by the Crown. When the governor rejected

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its request that he summon the Assembly—an invasion of his prerogative—the meeting ordered a committee to prepare for circulation a statement of its position.

James Otis and Samuel Adams, long embroiled in controversy with Thomas Hutchinson, served on the committee, and the former had leaned on the authority of Locke as far back as 1764. Hence the readiness to seek support in the *Two Treatises*; the extent of their familiarity with that work remains a question, however. Only a precise probe of the text will supply the answer.

The passionate Boston polemic discerned a "plan of Despotism" hastening to completion, its destined outcome political and religious slavery. To forestall that horrid eventuality, the colonists needed reminders that their government rested on *consent* that left them free and equal and possessed of *rights* none could invade. Those key terms, however, bore meanings different from those with which Locke endowed them.

The concept of *consent* rested intellectually upon the idea of social contract. Scholars who casually assumed that references to contract usually paraphrased Locke's *Second Treatise* explained obvious discrepancies by the assertion that Americans "did not always comprehend the contract theory fully." But certainly no New Englander had to learn from an alien philosophical disquisition about the nature of covenant, at the core of the Puritan tradition, and, as important, of the contemporary practice by which Yankees still formed towns and gathered in churches in the 1770s. Elsewhere in the colonies, people on the move relied upon the covenant for order, as when the North Carolina refugees in 1772 subscribed to the Watauga Association.

The meaning Americans gave to *consent* derived from their practical experience, which linked social order and discipline to a continuous process of popular approval. They chose to use power within communal groups to make the most of the opportunities provided by nature—that is, by the vast unoccupied spaces at the edge of their settlements. By contrast, although Locke asserted that "in the beginning all the world was *America*," he used the state of nature not in a sense the colonists would have recognized but by conjecture as an ahistorical theological abstraction. In his state of nature, fallen men ever encroached upon each other. The heirs of Adam remained ever on the verge of a bestial state of war so that, of their own consent, they made themselves members of a politic society to preserve their well-being. Consent once given lay beyond the power of individual retraction, thus far from the continuing process it was for Americans. Words however similar or even identical bore different connotations, across the ocean, across the century.

Free and equal. All men, according to Locke, were equally God's

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creatures and, from birth, equally free to obey his injunctions. They were not thereby equal in status, nor did they all enjoy the same liberties connected with status, in Locke's England and indeed in the England of 1770. Freedom gave people "a standing rule to live by," but not the same rule for all. In the colonies, by contrast, traditional ranks having disappeared, there remained only such social differences as personal wealth created; and freedom, a general condition, extended to all but slaves and dependent persons, such as wives, children, and apprentices. It was all very well, therefore, for Otis to cite Locke on equality and liberty, so long as no one probed the meaning of those words.

And *inalienable rights*. The colonists in debate often referred to their rights as Englishmen grounded in the ancient constitution, but ever more often assumed that those rights were inherent in human beings, hence natural and inalienable, a view affirmed by a century of New World experience. The Boston statement of grievances defined as rights whatever the people had not expressly ceded, so that governors, servants hired to protect individual rights, ought to be "content with the station assigned them." Hence the Bostonians regarded as infringements of their rights the royal salaries to the governor and judges, the powers given customs officials, the iron, hat, and dockyard acts, and the presumed plan to create an American episcopate, none with a foundation in the *Two Treatises*.

Locke was more disposed to emphasize obligations than rights, for by entering the social compact individuals surrendered the rights they had enjoyed in the state of nature. True, Locke also considered some rights like life and property inalienable, but those required the protection of positive law. Aggrieved people could withdraw and found a new government, but only if they had not previously consented and only if they respected the indivisibility of established territorial sovereignties; otherwise no one could emigrate at will, and thereby escape duties assumed under the social contract. The colonists, by contrast, well before 1776 had recognized the natural and universal right of movement and settlement, denying (1774) that humans could be deprived of the right God gave to the beasts of the forest and the birds of the air, "when their subsistence fails in one country to migrate to another." The law of nature in the colonies was simply the dictate of right reason.

Americans cited Locke frequently, but often in the most offhand way, as if to support anything the writers happened to be arguing. Nor will it do to stand the issue on its head by altering the cast of characters and substituting the Scottish moral philosophers for Locke. The case for Hutcheson and Hume is even flimsier than for Locke, for they do not appear frequently in the chains of great names that embellished colonial

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controversy. Nor are other suggestions—the ancient Saxons, Calvin, Lord Kames, Burlamaqui, and the English Whigs and Commonwealth men—more convincing.

Such searches for influence fail. Neither John Locke nor any other European writer exercised a determinative influence on American Revolutionary ideology. The motives that moved the rebellious colonists were products of their native soil. The founding fathers were not philosophers but politicians, for the most part trained as lawyers and thereby encouraged to use citations as they did precedents, so that whatever supported or seemed to support their cases became apposite. Polemical tactics shaped their practices as debaters in the press and in pamphlets. Their writings, therefore, made sense not as theory but as efforts at persuasion, responding to objections raised in an ongoing argument over issues made familiar by generations of New World experience. They borrowed where they could, often from sources that were themselves jumbles of inconsistent ideas. English, French, Swiss, Dutch, German, and Scottish theorists supplied them with a grab bag into which they reached for convenient phrases.

Every imputation of influence by words on acts calls for caution and for rigorous tracing of links between one and the other. No doubt the Bible and Calvin and Kant affected the way Americans understood ethics and faith, just as Montesquieu and Rousseau affected views on education and family life, and theorists from Adam Smith and J. B. Say to J. M. Keynes and F. A. Hayek affected economic policy. But only a close examination of texts and precise exploration of the linkage to actuality will clarify the relationship of words to acts. The words written reflect the intent of the author. But the words read have a quality of their own reflecting the situation of the readers, and only an understanding of the context reveals the relationship of the two.

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Oh God, Poor God

The State of Contemporary Theology

WILLIAM J. ABRAHAM

A shrewd friend from Ireland who is currently attempting to revitalize an old, dying Methodist church in North Carolina remarked caustically to me recently that we were due for another bout from the theologians any day now. Undoubtedly his mind was flooded with memories of the sixties when theologians had declared with enthusiasm that we needed a new reformation, or that the church was destined to disappear off the face of the planet, or that God had recently died. I was a little embarrassed by his comment. I made my living in part by teaching theology, and I could not in the least assure him that my colleagues would necessarily disappoint his implied predictions. Yet I had deep sympathy with his sentiments. I could not, even if I tried, convince him that he would get much help from the theologians for the awesome task in ministry that lay before him. Moreover, I had already come to the tentative conclusion that much modern theology is a deep embarrassment to anyone committed to the life of the mind.

Theologians themselves are wont to confess this. I have heard them speak of professional meetings at the American Academy of Religion as a place where one had to rummage around in the garbage cans in search of food. I have heard them complain of the low quality of students, of their lack of curiosity, and of their disinclination to take their studies seriously. Current summaries of the trade deploy images that continue the lament: we are told that "the spectrum has been shattered," or that we have come to "the end of the line." One leading American philosopher entitled his devastating review of a recently acclaimed book in theology as "Sheehan's Shenanigans: An Exercise in Theological Tomfoolery." Moreover, many theologians see themselves as deeply alienated from the church and from the whole theological enterprise. Some have taken refuge in ancillary disciplines, such as religious studies or literary criticism. One wonders if this is not a classical case of out of the frying pan and into the fire. I know of one theologian whose commitment to serious work in theology has led him to flee from the department of religious studies and escape to the philosophy department. At least there he felt that he could still be committed to the life of the mind, and he would escape the intellectual corruption from relativism that he judged was widespread in the field of religion.

Certainly, there is a sense in the culture at large that theology is mostly an ailing enterprise. This has little to do with the scandals associated with television religion; the latter make only a pretense of serious theological inquiry, and everyone knows that what little there is constitutes a public relations exercise to create an aura of respectability and to help roll in the dollars. Rather, the disillusionment about theology stems in part from the obvious fact that there are no theological giants abroad in the land anymore. There is nowhere the equivalent of a Jonathan Edwards in the eighteenth century, or a Horace Bushnell in the nineteenth century, or a Reinhold Niebuhr in the earlier half of the twentieth century. Many felt this absence keenly even in the seventies.

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When I was a graduate student at Oxford in the mid-seventies, we used to play an informal game of trying to identify a modern theological text to which we would unreservedly refer the inquiring lay person who desired a really good book in theology. We never came up with anything. I doubt if this was simply a matter of intellectual arrogance on our part, and I am not at all sure that the situation has really changed since then. As one leading English sociologist, a scholar with no commitment to theism or Christianity, once graphically expressed it to me after a lecture: Modern theologians are so worried about being kicked in the ditch by the modern world that they hastily jump into it to avoid this fate.

To be sure, this judgment may be overdrawn. It needs to be tempered by a variety of considerations. First, splendid work is being done in the array of disciplines that are cultivated within theology. Intellectually invigorating work is being executed in biblical studies, in church history, in theological ethics, and the like. There is no gainsaying this work, and it can stand shoulder to shoulder with any comparable discipline in the humanities. In fact, there are some universities where the school of theology sets the pace for the rest of the university. Second, here and there one does come across a truly penetrating mind in modern Anglo-American theology that considers seriously the many doubts and deeper questions and issues that lie at the heart of theology. Schubert Ogden of Southern Methodist University and James Barr of Oxford University come immediately to mind. Yet Ogden has spent so long digging the foundations in Hartshorne and Bultmann that we are still waiting to see what the final edifice will look like; while Barr has spent so much time destroying various foundations built by others that he has hardly even constructed a tent. Third, any evaluation of modern theology will inevitably reflect the prepossessions and prejudices of the judge offering it; part of the predicament of the modern theologian and his or her critic is precisely that there is no agreement on the data and warrants to be deployed in assessing the state of modern theology; it looks prima facie as if one is expressing one's sense of taste rather than offering a genuinely intellectual analysis. Yet even with these qualifications, it would take a sturdy optimist to argue that modern theology is in satisfactory shape. When it comes to a coherent, comprehensive vision of the great themes that have been the marrow of theology in the West, it is extremely difficult to overturn the analysis offered above. There is not much food for thought, and even less for the weary soul.

Insofar as there is a consensus in modern theology, those committed to it are liable to dismiss this assessment as reactionary and unfounded. Far from lamenting what goes on in the halls of modern theology, they celebrate it as exactly what is needed. It is extraordinarily difficult to summarize this consensus, but it is worth dwelling on it for a moment.

Any consensus in theology today begins with the rejection of the classical Christian tradition as this is generally known in Western culture. Traditional Christianity is strictly incredible. First, it is committed to a patriarchal deity, which is linguistically and ethically otiose. And second, this patriarchal deity is supposed to have intervened in the world in Israel and in Christ. This intervention in the world has been shattered by the canons of science and critical history. It is simply no longer possible to believe in a grandfather deity who sent his son into the world to save us from the original guilt and sin of Adam and who will intervene again to mop up the mess in which we find ourselves. Any kind of traditional theology as enshrined, say, in the classical creeds of the church is therefore impossible. To cling to it is to be a theological fundamentalist, and every schoolgirl now knows that fundamentalism is the Western version of theological escapism and ignorance. We need no longer bother with this alternative, much less teach it as a serious option to students. Or so it is believed.

What, then, is the theologian to do? He or she cannot reject the tradition completely; to go that far would be to abandon theology entirely. So the task is to reinterpret the tradition in terms that will speak, as they say, "meaningfully" to the modern age. That, after all, is how the scriptures and the creeds originally functioned. Together they embody the experience, insights, intuitions, provocative suggestions, metaphors, half-truths, myths, and symbols of earlier generations. In their own way they were once liberating and transforming for those who invented and used them. The task now is to take them and rework them, or screen them carefully, so that they can act as agents of liberation in the

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modern world. They need to be cleansed of their hierarchical and oppressive content and creatively used to help the church cope with the new situation in which it finds itself.

Thus the call has gone out to develop themes of liberation that will set free the poor, the oppressed, the handicapped, those trapped in society such as racial minorities, those sexually discriminated against, and the like. More broadly, the hope is expressed that a new synthesis in theology will enable the modern world to cope with the prospects of nuclear annihilation, and it will re-create its social and political order to accommodate the radical religious pluralism that is sweeping the world. This synthesis will be built on and deliberately geared to action; theology must now be intimately related to the social and political realities that are transparently oppressive to those who think seriously about the matter.

Implicit in much of this thinking is a particular reading of modernity. Earlier generations of theologians have made much of modernity. They saw themselves as intellectual evangelists who needed to cast the gospel in terms that would be intelligible to modern persons. The concept of modernity to earlier theologians was taken in one of two ways. On the one hand it could be taken in an intellectual sense. Modernity meant that the modern person was one informed by the canons of rationality developed in the European Enlightenment. Such a person could no longer believe in miracles and special divine revelation, hence the faith ultimately had to be demythologized to meet the intellectual challenge of the era. On the other hand, modernity could be taken in a sociological sense. In this sense the modern person was understood to be a secular person no longer shaped in any profound way by the institutions of Christianity but someone cut loose and alone in a sea of individualism and autonomy. Here a standard way to respond was to baptize the values of the secular person as more Christian than the traditional believer and to seek to join the secular person in his or her quest for authenticity, community, peace, and justice. The current consensus in theology does not reject these conceptions of modernity. It goes beyond them to appeal to a different conception—namely, to a socio-political conception of modernity.

Current theology suggests the modern person is someone who is inevitably enmeshed in a situation of oppression. The key issue to be faced in the present is the distribution of power. Unfortunately, power is restricted to certain groups; it is confined to certain people—say, the owners of the means of production—or to persons of a certain class, sex, or race. This has a determining effect on every aspect of culture. It affects language, literature, the interpretation of sacred texts, the substance of religious doctrines, national customs, regional superstitions, academic theologies, and political ideologies. More particularly, the exercise of power determines the system of belief that undergirds the intelligibility and legitimacy of the social order at any given time in a society. Analysis of the prevalent system of belief should not simply be an abstract, academic affair; it calls for "an engaged intellectual commitment," evokes a spirit of radical criticism of the status quo, and thrusts forward toward liberation as expressed in solidarity for the poor and the oppressed. Crucial in this view is a hermeneutic of suspicion that unmasks the rhetoric of normality, probes beneath the surface to expose the true forces at work in the world, while at the same time yearning for a vision of the cosmos that will lead to radical social transformation. In this wider context, the fundamental task of theology is to develop the intellectual resources that will lead to genuine liberation for the poor and the oppressed across the globe. Hence there emerges a set of theologies that focus on oppression derived from color, sex, race, and class.

At the popular level, conservative Protestant Christians dismiss all this as Marxism or communism in disguise. Given that conservative churches have been growing steadily during the last twenty years or so, and given that they have much greater social and political clout than they used to have, this kind of criticism tends to be dismissed in turn with scorn as an expression of bourgeois, capitalist faith. There is some truth to this countercharge, for it is certainly the case that conservative religion and conservative politics are intimately joined in concert in modern North America. Presidential elections make this only too clear. Perhaps this is one reason why conservatives themselves have failed to provide any serious alternative to the theologies of liberation that currently make the rounds. Their political orientation breeds a defensive-

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ness and a timidity that fails to inspire a penetrating approach to the deep issues with which the theologian has to wrestle. The leading conservative theologian of the last generation, Carl F. H. Henry, managed to produce a six-volume work of arid scholasticism that is already beginning to gather dust on library bookshelves. Where conservatives have really made their mark has been in the field of historical study, where George Marsden of Duke University currently leads the field by, it is true, a short head. This is a crucial development, for the evangelical tradition has enormous potential in theology, but it will only make the contribution of which it is capable if it has a deeper grasp of its own imprisonment in the categories of the late nineteenth century and if it can come to terms with the classical Christian heritage.

Conservative critics, moreover, fail to grapple with the real intent behind the quest for liberation in modern theology. The quest is driven by a variety of concerns that the theologian must face with robust determination. Primarily, the impetus behind much liberation theology is moral in character. It is a sincere attempt to cope with the ravages of oppression, poverty, discrimination, and political cruelty. Secondarily, it is an effort to break loose from the stranglehold of the canons of rationality adopted in the West from the time of the Enlightenment, especially as this rationality has been deployed in much systematic theology. Thus, black theologians have wanted to draw on sources such as hymns and spirituals of their tradition, which have been ignored by mainline scholars; and women have wanted to develop revisionist accounts of their place in the history of the church, which calls for a radical change of perspective elsewhere in theology. At a third level, the quest for liberation in modern theology is an attempt to find a place for the laity and the ordinary clergy in the thinking of the church, especially for those laity and clergy who come from parts of the world where the standard educational resources of the scholar are impaired or quite impossible to attain. All these concerns deserve to be taken with the utmost seriousness.

Two sorts of acute difficulties surface very quickly when the issues are examined more deeply. Expressed succinctly, one might say that sociological and philosophical claims are advanced with a maximum of certainty and a minimum of evidence. At the sociological level, there exists a strong tendency to adopt some kind of qualified Marxism as the way ahead. There is little sense of the complexity of the relationship between, say, class and religious commitment. One meets a kind of naïve social realism, as if the real forces at work in society can be discerned with ease. Notions like "the poor" or "the third world" become code words laden with ideological freight that is impossible to dislodge with contrary evidence. The "poor" are redefined to designate those who have had the approved consciousness-raising into the preferred vision of the world, and the "third world" is evoked as a category that conveniently ignores the millions who are currently flocking into Pentecostalism. Moreover, in the name of inclusiveness, a whole new hierarchy of leaders emerges. As a result, those giving papers find themselves compelled to make the appropriate apologies about their place in the social order before they begin, or they deftly display their sympathy with the values of the new hierarchy by an introductory anecdote. Contrary voices are screened out of serious discussion as a threat to the new consensus and as enemies of the politics of liberation. Alternative positions are dismissed because of the persons who present them rather than the data or warrants that support them.

Upholding the new consensus requires some very sophisticated moves in epistemology. The standard weapon wielded is a version of relativism developed from T. S. Kuhn's work in the philosophy of science—namely, his notion of paradigm shifts. According to some readings of Kuhn, intellectual revolutions in science involve radical shifts in perspective that make it impossible to adjudicate rationally between competing theories. It is not clear that Kuhn himself held this position, for it has been cogently argued that he was in fact attempting to broaden the rather narrow conception of rationality that natural scientists tended to canonize. This point and the intense debate about it in the philosophy of science has been conveniently ignored by theologians. It is much easier for the theologian to dispose of the opposition by claiming that the notion of data, warrants, evidence, and the like is already theory-laden, so there is no point in continuing the conversation as equals. Neutrality, disinterestedness, the quest for the truth for its own sake—all of

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these are dismissed with a pleasing sense of victory as part of the old paradigm that is now destined for displacement. The issue then becomes one of academic politics, and at this stage one returns to talk about the class struggle and oppression. Not everyone wants to embrace this kind of relativism, of course, but it is difficult to find a good old-fashioned objectivist who is prepared to hold out against it. Where one does, as in the case of Rosemary Reuther of Garrett-Evangelical Seminary, she skillfully redefines the objectivism or universalism embraced in a thoroughly self-serving fashion.

What this means is that the theologian has become intellectually lazy. This laziness is initially expressed in a lamentable failure to deal with the sociological and philosophical issues related to the fundamental claims that are being advanced. The habit begins because of the omission of these disciplines from the basic training of theologians. Sociology of religion hardly exists at the master of divinity level, and philosophy of religion is not taken very seriously. Even at the graduate level, the introduction to these disciplines is perfunctory; insufficient time is given for the maturing theologian to find his or her bearings in the relevant material. Where philosophy is taken seriously, the approach tends to be in the tradition of Hegel and Heidegger, with disparaging glances directed here and there at the debate in recent Anglo-American philosophy on the nature of religious language. As a result, the most astonishing claims about the nature of society, or about the relation between interests and truth, or about the character and meaning of religious discourse, or about the fundamental character of all knowledge, or about the rationality of religious belief can be advanced without any sense of internal self-criticism and with unchallengeable dogmatism. Moral passion displaces intellectual rigor; righteous indignation and thinly veiled anger do service for analytical skill; primary sources in the field, including that of approved authorities like Marx, are treated as already read; worse still, opponents are dismissed because they do not belong to the favored group or class. By wielding a set of code words and by stitching together a diverse set of elusive sociological and philosophical jargon, the theologian is able to give the impression that we are confronted by a passionate and enduring vision of reality. In truth, what we have for the most part is the skillful reworking and expansion of the dregs of the Western political Enlightenment. It is small wonder that those who thirst for God as a living reality and yearn for the company of the saints and martyrs in the community of God's grace turn aside in disappointment; they have been looking for bread and have been once more offered a stone.

It should be no surprise that Christians who have been trained to think more cogently often turn aside and take matters into their own hands. Failing to receive help from the theologians, they take to doing theology themselves. One of the most astonishing features of the current theological scene is the spectacle of accomplished philosophers turning to articulate, discuss, and uphold the kind of basic theological doctrines that theologians have dismissed as antediluvian and incredible. In the last decade or so, several highly respected philosophers have either been converted to Christianity or have come back to the faith after dismissing it as nonsense in the early part of their careers. They have been joined by Christians who trained as philosophers and earned a solid reputation by their work in the classical disciplines of the trade. Together they constitute a remarkable group from diverse Christian traditions who have founded their own society with more than eight hundred members and meet regularly in such places as the University of Notre Dame to share their ruminations. Outside philosophy they are scarcely known. Inside the academic world they are a formidable group: Michael Dummett, Basil Mitchell, Peter Geach, John Lucas, Keith Ward, and Richard Swinburne represent a core in England; William Alston, George Mavrodes, Peter Van Inwagen, Robert Adams, Alvin Plantinga, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Eleonore Stump, Alan Donagan, and Alasdair MacIntyre work in North America.

Underneath and around these scholars is a welter of younger scholars eagerly attending to themes that were once thought essential to serious theology. One recent conference took up such themes as original sin, the Christian scheme of salvation, the Trinity, weakness of will, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the nature of Christian liberty, and the suffering of God. During the next generation this new development is likely to have a profound effect on the future of theology. If the resources and skills cultivated in this enterprise

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are transmitted within theology as a whole, then the outcome could well be a surprise to those theologians who currently dismiss the interests of the philosophers as much too propositional and conservative. Certainly, the philosophers have a good deal of homework still to do on the biblical material and on the history of Christian doctrine; but the intellectual ferment and rigor of analysis they display far outstrips what one commonly encounters in modern theology. Sooner or later this kind of study will prove attractive and fruitful for theology itself.

Another and very different way to respond to the present crisis in theology should be noted. Christian theologians have at times been very cautious about what they can achieve. This derives from at least two sources. On the one hand, it derives from a sense of inadequacy in the face of the utter complexity and mystery of the divine order. Somehow, the noise of the solemn assemblies of modern theology is just that: noise rather than genuinely good news about God and what God has done for the liberation of the creation. It fails to acknowledge the limitation of the human intellect in its attempts to unravel the mystery of God's action in the world. On the other hand, the reticence of theologians derives also in part from the place of scripture, the classical creeds of the church, and the great hymnody and liturgies of the faithful in the life of Christian communities throughout the generations. Many theologians believe that these materials have a profound ability to transmit the Christian vision of creation, salvation, cosmic renewal, and the life to come. To try to replace these with the kind of revisionism that has been tried again and again in Western Protestantism since the Enlightenment and is now eagerly embraced by some Roman Catholic scholars has not served either the church or modern culture conspicuously well. In fact, there is something ludicrous with the view common in American theological seminaries that each theological student must, in the space of a semester or so and after a short period of modest study, develop his or her own creed and shortly thereafter be licensed to inflict this creed on the church at large. Compelling reasons can, of course, be given for this practice, not least that students need to own the Christian tradition for themselves. But overall this practice appears more like yet another expression of modern individualism masquerading as creativity than it does as an appropriate approach to Christian theology. A true and truly Christian theology will surely be deeply rooted in revelation and tradition, in worship and prayer in the Christian community, in compassion and service in the world, in fear and trembling before the wonder of the Christian gospel, and in humble dependence on the grace and agency of the Holy Spirit. Yet precisely these notes are the ones missing from the prevailing canons of theological discourse.

Interestingly, these notes are sounded in a version of the Christian tradition long ignored or summarily dismissed by the West—namely, in the heart of the Eastern tradition. The Eastern tradition recognizes about five great theologians in all of history. By Western standards, where everyone can become a theologian after suitable training, this appears nonsensical. But what if the Eastern tradition is correct and the West is wrong? Then the present malaise in theology might well be something one should expect. Modern theology is in the grim state in which it finds itself because it is built on foundations that were faulty from the outset. On the one hand, it rests on a flawed assumption about the whole theological enterprise—that is, on the rejection of revelation, worship, and tradition as the fundamental womb in which theology flourishes. It is all very well to make pleas for the gospel to be applied to the horrors of the modern world, but it is an important truism to insist that if there is no gospel to begin with then there is nothing at all to apply. On the other hand, much of the quest for a new and relevant theology stems from hopelessly high expectations—chief among them the expectation that a new theologian will appear on the scene once every ten years or so. What one might more reasonably expect is that a true theologian might appear once every five hundred years or so.

This does not mean that there is nothing for the intellectuals in the church to do. The church always needs teachers. Their task is to make manifest as best they can the mystery, profundity, and clarity of the gospel, to spell out its implications for the various contexts in which the church must minister and serve, to clear away obstacles from the path to understanding, to renew the life of worship, mission, and faithfulness from within, and to

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relate the faith of the church to the profound questions and challenges that crop up from time to time. Such a mission will keep a genius or two occupied for three score years and ten in any generation. In the last generation, George Florovsky or Alexander Schmemann come to mind as examples of the Eastern tradition in North America. It will require, moreover, not merely stamina, brains, courage, access to libraries, appropriate intellectual formation in the relevant disciplines, and the like, to be a theologian; but it will depend crucially on the daily inspiration of the Holy Spirit graciously given in the liturgy of the church and in the devotional life of the individual. Inspiration and devotion are for the most part set aside as peripheral by the modern theologian who places himself or herself primarily within either a secularized university or out on the streets in protest and perceives the church as an impoverished institution badly in need of a good course of lectures.

Whether the Eastern tradition will have any serious influence on the Western tradition is an open question. The Eastern churches in the West currently live in a diaspora that tends to foster a fortress mentality that conceals the vast riches they have to offer. It is also a moot question whether Western theology will attend to the crucial issues that modern philosophers committed to the Christian faith have raised. If Western theology did, then theologians might well be able to tackle the material made available by the sociologists; and, who knows, maybe theologians could help renew the church in the West in a profound way.

We Have No Need

JOANNA ANOS

We have no need now for the long farewell.
It seems always when we embraced we fell,
were falling even as the world like night
fell down around us soundlessly from sight.
Like silk about our shoulders draped the sky,
its touch so cool, its lightness but a lie.

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In the Middle of the Journey of Our Life

TOM HANSEN

How has it happened that green and forty
and only a growing boy,
I, who am far from being old
and even farther from being a kindly old lady,
have gathered about me in distant closeness
these several old lady friends?

I am that nice young man from the college.
Professor Hansen at first.
Then, in silence, I undergo
an awkward uncertain transmogrification,
emerging, at last, as Tom
to my elderly friends of the female persuasion.

When Edna was all of my age,
I was in diapers. Or less.
When Isabel stood where I stand now,
I was in utero, lapping the watery dark.
When Helen was forty, I was a cipher,
an inconceivable ought.

But I am a man of substance now:
Pustle-Gut Tom, Ham-Hock Hansen—
no longer able to hoist my two boys,
one young bugger under each arm,
and hotfoot them downstairs to bed
yelling YA-HOO! and WHOOPIE!

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Sometimes I stand at the top of the stairs
and see them far below—
a two-year-long rope stretching between them
but separated from me
by thirty-odd years of taut slack
hanging down from my climbing harness.

Across crevasse and up sheer precipice,
feeling our slow way,
with crampon and piton I hang on
for all our dear lives—
hourly uttering spells
against avalanche. Against rockfall.

By nightfall, we take what sanctuary
the mountain chooses to give.
Shoulder to shoulder, in cold, in darkness,
we eat. Bump elbows. Make small talk.
Later, I watch them huddle to sleep
tangled in each other's arms.

At dawn, I shout them awake and make them
hit their hands and arms on their chests
and beat their legs with their fists.
We eat, we talk our day's climb.
We pack our rucksacks, we start. . . .
Soon rope is all we have between us.

I grow weak as they grow strong,
and one day soon, it will begin—
the inner counselor's
inarticulate whisper:

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"Cut free. Come home. Enter again
the cold cathedral of stone."

Suddenly, there is a tug from above.
Another line tied to my harness?
Someone urging me upward. But who?
Out of the mist of cloud overhead
come their voices—three shaky old ladies
softly calling my name.

"Turn here, Tom. This is the one."
I brake too hard on the ice-covered street:
the car eases into a gentle spin—
whirling, as if in slow motion,
like a dream of a body softly falling
end over end into space.

The car stops, facing the other direction.
The driveway we slid past lies just ahead. . . .
I help them up the treacherous steps
of their slowly decaying house
and drive home to my boys, slowly, decaying,
holding my breath all the way.

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Danke Schön, Herr Doktor

German Jews in Palestine

RUTH GAY

There is a puzzle in Israel that does not agitate many hearts at the moment, but the question is: What happened to fifty-five thousand German Jews? Between 1933 when Hitler came to power and the end of the war, fifty-five thousand German Jews emigrated to Palestine, most legally, some illegally by British Mandate standards. In the small Jewish settlement there, which in 1931 counted only 175,000 souls, they added a substantial percentage. By 1945 the influx of refugees from Eastern and Central Europe combined with the natural increase had raised the Jewish population to 554,000. The German Jews, then, made up 10 percent of the Jewish population. Yet educated, skilled, and, in some cases, even moneyed, after half a century they have sunk, leaving hardly a trace in the Israeli national consciousness outside of a pejorative term—*Yekke*—and some inkling that they were significant in the beginnings of the Hebrew University.

Theirs was an unexpected odyssey because Zionism in Germany had long been derided as "Third Party Zionism"—that is, one party gives to a second party so that a third party can go to Palestine. Yet Palestine was seized upon as one of the earliest choices for German Jews anxious to get out, and by 1935 as many as twenty-five thousand had already reached Palestine.

In a message to the nineteenth Zionist Congress in that year, Chaim Weizmann, then president of the organization, sounded the note of *Schadenfreude* that was to characterize the reception of the German Jews in the next decade. "The fate of the German Jews," he wrote, "sustained through generations by illusion has brought them to a violent end, and has opened the Jewish Question once again in all the lands of the Diaspora." This unforgiving attitude toward the culture and life that the Jews had developed in Germany, their "illusion," was to accompany them in the new setting of Palestine. It also helped turn an old Diaspora stereotype on its head.

The century-long hostility between East European Jews and German Jews had been based on the greater Westernization of the German Jews and their relative prosperity compared to their much poorer, more isolated East European cousins. The mutual disdain of each group for the other was no secret; the difficulty was that the East European Jews experienced it as immigrants to Germany where they were in a vulnerable position, poor outsiders coping with another language and another culture, a source of embarrassment to their better-situated German brethren. But in Palestine, the German Jews were coming to an essentially East European Jewish settlement, the fruit of half a century of hardship. What quickly hit the new arrivals and has stuck to this day was the epithet *Yekke*. There are few such terms for nationalities in Israel, but *Yekke* is ubiquitous. German Jews tend to give it a harmless etymology, attributing it to their habit of wearing jackets (in German *Jacke*), a formality long since abandoned in Israel on both climatic and ideological grounds by the settled community.

A more malicious interpretation holds that it is an acronym from the Hebrew phrase: *Yehudi k'she Havana*, a slow-witted Jew. The

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condescending tone of the word and the array of jokes at the expense of the German Jews that sprang up in the 1930s served to establish an image of unworldly characters, immutably fixed in the habits of their German bourgeois life and unable to cope with or to comprehend the new world to which they had come. The saddest definition of all was offered by an old German Jew summarizing, in the 1980s, the German-Jewish experience in Israel: "A *Yekke* is someone," he said, "who lives in a past that never had a future."

The German Jews who came to Palestine in the 1930s came in on an unfolding drama that was half a century old. In that time, Palestine had been transformed from a state of mind, a construct in the imagination of religious Jews or Zionists, to a real place in which politics, the price of land, water rights, immigration permits, and other worldly issues shaped the course of daily life.

Especially immigration permits. Immigration was controlled by Great Britain, which had assumed the Mandate for Palestine in 1922 and had tied Jewish settlement "to the economic capacity of the country to absorb new arrivals." The energetic immigrants of the 1920s stood in great contrast to the first waves of idealistic and perilously ignorant pioneers. Those who came after World War I were urban and experienced, and they changed the face of Palestine, bringing with them industrial and commercial skills. The first electrical network in Palestine, for example, was installed in 1923 according to plans drawn up by Pinhas Rutenberg, an engineer from Russia.

Although the new system was a marvel in Palestine, it was also a symbol of how late and backward the country was compared to Western Europe. In 1928 only twenty-seven factories in all of Palestine had more than fifty workers, and 91 percent of the industrial establishments had five or fewer. The development of industry in these early years was rather haphazardly based on the accident of the immigrant's particular skill and the amount of capital he had brought with him. Yet these new enterprises counted twice. They were not only providing jobs, but they were also increasing the absorptive capacity of the country—that critical criterion for future immigration.

But on a day-to-day level, the country retained its pre-industrial look. The German Jews who arrived after 1933 were struck by the street scene with its peddlers and water sellers and traditional markets and bazaars. Yet in a country without a modern distribution system, these were not only the prime source for the city dwellers' daily needs, but they were also a principal means of exchange between town and country.

A convinced Zionist such as Schlomo Rülf, however, who had been a rabbi in Saarbrücken, romanticized the Jewish life he saw when he arrived in 1933. As his ship stood outside Jaffa waiting for daylight, he acknowledged how "in the first morning light Jaffa shone in brilliant colors with its walls and towers and minarets." But this vision was soon dispelled as they came on shore. "Upon closer acquaintance," he observed, "Jaffa turned out to be filthy, loud and Levantine," the latter not a word of praise in his vocabulary. Tel Aviv was another matter. "A banal city," he conceded in contrast to picturesque Jaffa, "but *our* Hebrew city." Tel Aviv was "a normal, clean city of middle size, built on the European model. The traffic was lively and everywhere construction was under way; although there was not much aesthetic charm to be discovered. But most important for us were the Hebrew signs on the shops and on the kiosks, that there were Jewish bus drivers, Jewish policemen and above all splendid children. . . . Yes it was just as we had imagined."

A more dubious report by Arnold Zweig, writing from Haifa to Sigmund Freud in January 1934, is perhaps more typical of the way life in Palestine first appeared to urban, middle-class Jews coming from Central Europe. Zweig begins his letter symbolically enough, as he is smoking his last French cigar, and what he describes first are the many "discomforts of daily life. First the central heating didn't work, then the petroleum stove began to stink, then the rain ran under the door which had to be made tight, but as soon as the wind shifted, it began to come in the window, all of which cost patience, time, ingenuity and newspapers. . . ." But these questions of practical life, he comments, moving from the personal to the general, are symptomatic "of the only creakingly functioning apparatus of civilization [that] is the main problem in this country."

After two years, in November 1935, again writing to Freud, Zweig draws a balance sheet. He had made the right choice for his wife and children in coming to Palestine, he

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thinks, but it has not been right for him "politically and culturally.... People demand their Hebrew and I cannot deliver it. I am a German writer and a German European and this recognition has its consequences. But where to live if not here.... It hardly matters where one sits, if one is not at home." And then somewhat wistfully he asks, "How long, then, do you believe that it will continue to look brown in Germany?"

Learning Hebrew seems to have been notoriously difficult for the German immigrants who, in a kind of vicious circle, were dependent upon one another's company so long as they had no other language. It was not for want of trying. In 1934 the German immigrant organization conducted eighteen evening schools with an enrollment of two thousand students, and the Zionist organization in Germany included the slogan, "Learn Hebrew before you come to Palestine!" on all its literature. Yet it remained a lifelong problem. Still today, old German kibbutzniks, fifty years in the country, will apologize for their faulty Hebrew and will more happily read the *Israelitisches Wochenblatt*, a German-language weekly published in Israel, or *Aufbau*, the German-language refugee paper published in the United States, than read the Hebrew newspapers. Even those who came with some background soon discovered that their rather literary version of the language was not very useful in daily life. They could not help but bring Europe with them when they arrived in the thirties, but the Levantine world they found onto which modern Jewish life was to be grafted made an already difficult task more so.

Three decades into the twentieth century, the Moslem population in the country, which came to nearly a million in 1935, had hardly moved from centuries-old traditional life. Europe's old romance with the Arab world continued to be fed by the picturesque costumes, the improbable camels, and the beauty of the inhospitable desert. The Bedouins who were largely concentrated in the Negev continued to travel from pasture to pasture living in their tents of black goats' hair, eking out a meager existence on the fringes of settled Palestine. What visitors, camera in hand, tended to overlook, however, were the children with trachoma and rachitic limbs, nor did they think of the early death that awaited the patient and ceremonious nomads. The Arab *fellaheen* hardly lived better, using ancient methods of cultivation and husbandry, resigned to their poverty that was exacerbated by rapacious landlords. While their cows gave an average of four hundred liters of milk a year, the production on the Jewish farms or in the colonies of the German Templars, which used modern methods of stock breeding, was ten times that much. Commercial life, too, based on barter and bargaining that sufficed for the local economy did not prove very useful in international trade, while necessities such as food, cloth, and kerosene needed to be imported.

This mixture of squalor and charm, stagnation and development was what greeted the German Jews as they arrived. The political situation that they found before them was no less troubled. For the Jews there were problems with the Arabs, with the British government, and with the eternal question of the "absorptive capacity" of the land. The intransigence of the Arabs toward Jewish settlement that had begun with the Balfour Declaration had gradually risen over the years to a more or less permanent state of armed hostility punctuated by organized violent outbreaks. It culminated in 1936 in what was called a general strike that actually initiated a three-year period of warfare. By one of those strange conjunctions of the calendar, on November 9, 1938, the very day of the Nazi-organized pogrom against the Jews of Germany, Great Britain issued a statement rejecting the reports of two successive partition commissions. After studying the second report, the government declared the partition solution "impracticable" and decided to "continue their responsibility for the government of the whole of Palestine."

The anxiously awaited White Paper of May 1939 formulated the new British policy on Palestine; it offered the Jews a total quota of "75,000 immigrants over the next five years ... subject to the criterion of economic absorptive capacity." At this point, on the eve of the war, there were still 650,000 Jews visibly at risk in Europe. It was a time, as the Jewish Agency soberly commented, "when it must be the goal of most German Jews to become a refugee."

In Palestine, meanwhile, the fifty-five thousand German Jews who had managed to gain admittance were beginning on the long road of adaptation to another culture, although in

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their homeland. By 1933 the settled Jewish community of Palestine—the Yishuv—had developed certain clear characteristics. It was, both in principle and actuality, Hebrew speaking. (Yiddish had been vanquished in the debate over the national language when Great Britain had named Hebrew as one of three official languages of the country.) Numerically, the Yishuv was dominated by Jews from Eastern Europe. In politics it leaned heavily toward socialism; in ideology it was egalitarian and anti-bourgeois.

While there was scarcity in the cities and hardship on the land, what is universally remembered by the first immigrants is the selflessness of the enterprise, the exhilaration of making a new world and of being, as one early arrival to Jerusalem put it, a part of a classless society. One of the German Zionists who came in the 1920s was a young philologist from Königsberg. She came with her husband, who was that most prized of scientists, an agronomist, bringing along her Bechstein piano, her university degree, and a conventional middle-class upbringing. The Bechstein still stands in her apartment in Jerusalem, like a beached whale from another world, consuming half the space in her living room. Her manners remain formal and graceful. But in those early days, she lost herself in the euphoria that her generation felt as the distinctions of old Europe fell away. Propelled by idealism, prepared for a Spartan life as the badge of their enterprise, the young German Zionists of the 1920s came with wings on their feet, Hebrew on their lips, ready to do and to endure anything.

The German-Jewish immigrants who came in the 1930s brought a different constellation of values with them. They were tenaciously German-speaking, not very political and thoroughly middle-class. They were older than the preceding generation, burdened with family responsibilities, with half a life of accomplishment behind them. How to bridge the gap between the existing community and the immigrants and how to integrate the newcomers was a matter of concern when it was not a matter of reproach. Berl Katznelson, the Zionist labor leader, speaking at the Zionist Congress of 1935, was unsparing of the new arrivals whom he termed "incomplete Jews. They lack Hebrew culture," he said, "and the highest sense of national fulfillment. They are refugees—burned and uprooted. Not only are they uprooted from their social and economic rights, but also from the roots of national culture and cultural experience. . . . Our task is to prevent them from doing us harm and make them join the builders."

The Jewish Agency, however, took a more positive view of the problem and, as we noted earlier, immediately organized the Bureau for the Settlement of German Jews, with a special sub-section known as RASSCO. This was an acronym for the Rural and Suburban Settlement Company whose single purpose was the settlement of middle-class Jews on the land. From the beginning, therefore, the German Jews had a mixed reception. On the one hand, institutions were created to help them find their place in their new home; on the other hand, they seemed to move under a cloud of suspicion and disapproval. But at first their main question was how to rescue themselves and their worldly goods from the hands of the Nazis. Jewish wealth in Germany was estimated to amount to four billion marks or about one billion dollars. For all practical purposes, however, the funds had been blocked and could only be moved out of the country with government permission.

An unlikely person was the innovator of the daring scheme called the *Haavarah*, or Transfer Plan, designed to free these resources. Chaim Arlosoroff, a Socialist leader in Palestine, visited Germany in the spring of 1933 when he suggested the idea to Jewish leaders. Unfortunately he was assassinated a few months later and never lived to see it put into effect. But the plan was in fact inaugurated in August 1933 and resulted ultimately in the transfer of more than forty million dollars of Jewish capital from Germany to Palestine.

The way it worked was that the blocked Jewish funds were used to buy German goods that were then exported to Palestine. There they were sold and the money realized on the sale was used to reimburse the owner of the blocked account when he arrived in Palestine. One major benefit of this method of transfer was that it permitted German Jews to enter Palestine outside the quota. Under the category "Capitalist," anyone with at least one thousand pounds was eligible to take up residence in Palestine. And some 36 percent of the German Jews entered on capitalist certificates. In a country as poor in manufactured goods as Palestine in the 1930s, the *Haavara* imports supplied otherwise scarce commodi-

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ties. Even more important, the plan gave the German Jews essential materials and machinery with which to establish industry in the country and themselves as entrepreneurs.

All of this activity was taking place against a background of remarkable restructuring of Jewish occupations. During the 1930s a regular feature of the *Mitteilungsblatt*, the German and Hebrew newspaper of the German-speaking immigrants, was the advertising suggesting new business opportunities for former doctors, dentists, and other professionals who were suddenly superfluous. One imaginative notice by a real-estate broker was headed "Doctor" and suggested that a doctor "could find a possibility for a livelihood" by buying a pair of the broker's double houses and converting them into a "Diet Boarding House," which he, the doctor, would supervise.

Others, of course, held to their original professions and also published their arrival in the *Mitteilungsblatt*, both as a signal to their former clients and as an indication of status to new ones. How much could be deciphered by a knowledgeable reader from a previous street address or affiliation! The dentist, Dr. Georg Loewy, announced that he had transferred his practice from Breslau, Garten Str. 51 to Tel Aviv, Ramban Street 6, a welcome bit of news, presumably for former Breslauers. Or there was the corsetiere who advertised the opening of her new shop with the reference that she had formerly been with "Einstein, Berlin."

In towns such continuity with the past was at least possible. Most of those who settled on the land, by contrast, came having begun their transformation by training on farms in Germany run by various Zionist groups. But their new life in Palestine brought some unwelcome surprises. In the early days of the kibbutz movement, when it was the principle of the socialist leadership to break up large national groups, many young German Jews often found themselves isolated in large kibbutzim. One such kibbutznik in 1936 poured out his heart in a letter to a friend:

> What is critical for us Jews from Germany is the outright rejection of the German Aliyah, a rejection that does not hurt less because it is also sometimes not so visible. We do not play the smallest part here. There is a group of good German *chaverim* [comrades] who have already mastered the language, who have an iron will, who carry through their work, but all in vain. What depresses me so much is that I am also one of those who believe that the German immigrants are taken on in the first place because they are associated with the money that they bring. When I realize that all the Germans believe this, whether they are willing to discuss it or not, then I know that a large part of the German Aliyah will soon leave us.

When the issue of national cohesion was fought through to the point where German Jews were allowed to form their own kibbutzim or to make up a large group in mixed kibbutzim, the sense of isolation and exploitation diminished. These German kibbutzim, like the earlier ones, also shared the hardships of beginning in a harsh land, but bringing with them the intention of using every resource that science and technology could offer. The fatalism and traditionalism of the Arab fellaheen were not the model the German Jews had in mind.

When, in 1945, the young secretary of the newly founded kibbutz Galed talked to one of his Arab neighbors about the stones that covered the fields and impeded planting, the Arab responded with a legend. The stones, the Arab said, had been deposited by God by mistake. He had intended to sow flowers in the fields, but had reached for the wrong sack and instead had sown stones. "The stones," he said, "are from Allah and the human being must accept them." At the kibbutz a different reckoning went on. Work convoys labored nine-hour days on a four-year work plan to clear the land for plowing and planting. The Arabs looked on and saw such work almost as blasphemous. German-Jewish tenacity, however, bore fruit and not only in Galed. In all, some four thousand German Jews were absorbed in the kibbutz Hameuchad, the largest kibbutz umbrella organization.

Although the German Jews at first seemed more embedded in their national culture than others, it was soon apparent that no group was free of its past. However much each group wanted to start afresh in the new land, however much they thought they had cast off the old, they had brought with them more in their baggage than they realized. Even in that great leveler, the kibbutz, the comrades soon discovered that ideology could not erase culture. In fact many Jews did not realize how "German" or "Polish" or "Roumanian" they

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were until their lifelong assumptions and habits suddenly ran head on into another set of equally firmly held notions.

But in a highly self-conscious socialist environment, this fragmentation did not go unnoticed. In order to prevent nationalities from clustering together, one kibbutz instituted a rule about seating in the dining hall. People were to take the next seat available as each table filled, so that chance would mix the groups. But memory is not to be cheated. Forty years later, as I was visiting this kibbutz, one of the German members introduced another kibbutznik who was also among the first settlers. "And this is Aryeh," he said, bringing him forward, "one of our Roumanian comrades." One of the early German kibbutzniks, looking back at the beginnings, offered a neat typology. "If they have a library, it's a German kibbutz, if they have a symphony orchestra, it's a Russian kibbutz, and if they keep buying more and more land, it's a Polish kibbutz." While half a century later, such an observation can be offered with a kind of nostalgic humor, in the early days the differences were more apparent and more abrasive than the similarities.

German Jews with less ideology and more years behind them than the kibbutzniks also found their way to agriculture, generally with the help of the Rural and Suburban Settlement Company. Margaret Turnowsky-Pinner, a historian who came from Posen, describes how the immigrant thought about the situation:

> How was he to begin? What was the former lawyer or government official or bank director or businessman to do with his small capital, without the language, with his German upbringing in this oriental land? He, the *Yekke*, was here scorned as the carrier of a decadent culture, ridiculed for his pedantic correctness, and often exploited by cleverer types. Should he be grateful when a friend found him a small office job that a fifteen-year-old could fill as well as he, or probably better, since the youngster would know Hebrew, while he, with great effort, had only mastered a few fragments? Or should he allow his wife to work as a housemaid in order to earn a basic amount for their subsistence? Or should he join the army of "Royal Peddlers" who would deliver wine, cigars and chocolate to better situated friends? It was better to go to the country, to attempt the hard and unaccustomed work, to know oneself to be part of a circle of people engaged in the same struggle, to be free, and one's own master.

Another eyewitness recalled how the lawyers among the German Jews were particularly hard hit by the requirements for practicing under the Mandate. They needed to know Ottoman, English, and Rabbinical law, and were required to pass their examinations in at least two of the country's three languages. "For many of them," she observed, "it was beyond their strength. They went to settle on the land."

The German Jews who flocked to the land added a new middle-class alternative to land settlement. This was the *moshav*, which combined the bourgeois need for privacy and conventional family life with cooperative use of land and resources. Although the first *moshav* was founded in 1922, in the thirties the idea exercised a particular appeal for groups of Jews from Germany, especially those who wanted to settle together. The families with young children who came in the German immigration did not have young fathers. According to the code of German-Jewish bourgeois life, men waited to marry until they were ready to support a household so that in a typical family the husband, who married in his late twenties, was often five or six years older than his wife. Of the sixty-nine families who started the settlement of Beth Yitzhak in 1934, only four men were under thirty. In 1938 in the two middle-class colonies Ramot Hashavim and Nahariya, the average age of the men was forty-one and thirty-seven years respectively.

One participant described the founding of the first German-Jewish collective—Ramot Hashavim—in 1933 and the strange suspended state of mind of those early years. Its members, who were largely academics, wanted to remain together. Considering their inexperience in farming and the small amount of land available to them, the founders very rationally concluded that they would keep chickens and specialize in egg production. Combining this decision with expert advice, they soon built up a collective that became a model in Palestine for its scientific methods and productive results. But the idea of the learned professors working in their chicken houses aroused only irrepressible laughter in the Yishuv. The village was quickly named the *Kikirikidorf*—the Cock-a-doodle-do village—and they themselves were called the *Eier Yekkes*—the Egg Yekkes. With this name, their memoirist recalls with some dis-

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tress, they were "stamped as punctual, exaggeratedly precise, ceremonious and slow."

To the German Jews, this attack was like an "insubstantial dream" that they could not absorb, could not deal with except by segregating it to some separate level of consciousness. All this was happening at a time when much of reality was no longer comprehensible. In all the disorientation brought about by change of countries, change of language, and the drastic reorientation of their lives, people hardly knew any longer who they were. But they worked earnestly and doggedly and attempted to build another existence. "It was only after many years that this trauma was gradually resolved through the living of the new life, although for many," our reporter from Ramot Hashavim pointed out, "this resolution never came about." But even for the "*Eier Yekkes*" it was not all pain. "The experience of the land," the reporter recalls, "this unique land with its shattering, harsh beauty, the experience of the difficulty of daily life in the first year, also brought an entirely new sense of happiness with it."

In the small islands of concentrated settlement such as Ramot Hashavim, much of the life they knew was unself-consciously preserved. The historian Saul Friedländer, who came to Nira as a teenager in 1948 after a precarious wartime existence in France, recalls his impressions when he encountered again these Central European types familiar to him from his childhood in Prague. "Out of thirty heads of households in Nira," he writes in his autobiography, *When Memory Comes*, "at least half were *Herr Doktors*. During the day they were all transformed: one might well have mistaken who they were, had it not been for the fact that they were just a bit *too* peasant, *too* unbuttoned. And there was also the language problem: their guttural accents, incomprehensible in any other context, represented, not a flight of recently acquired Biblical eloquence, but some typical Berlin speech patterns. Their German was punctuated, however, by a number of Hebrew words, the ones for chicken yard, sprinkler, tractor or orange grove."

But "Yesterday," in the words of an emigré song, "is still there; yesterday is not yet over," and the evidence for this observation emerged in the evening, when work was done. "Over their bridge game," Friedländer remembers, "surrounded by the few pieces of furniture and books that still belonged to 'back home,' our peasants took on their real nature once more and dropped their masks, so to speak. Heller, Fleischmann, Prager or Glaser seemed to forget the mosquito bites, the drone of the sprinklers or the smell of orange blossoms, and they must all have had the impression that they were back once again in those large, rather dark apartments that I had known for such a short time, but whose scent, that discreet charm made up of old things, wax-polished wood and well-worn leather, I could still describe today." In the privacy of families, customs and manners might survive, but there was no mood of elegy when the immigrants first came. The rush of energy that accompanied the Zionist settlement and the ruthless will to transform Diaspora Jews into the new Jews of Eretz Israel left no time to sort out what was worth saving from the past. In such an atmosphere the distinctive qualities of German-Jewish culture went underground. The German language was not officially taught in the Hebrew University until 1976, and Wagner still remains an unacceptable composer in concert programming.

In this bewildering situation where even success was rewarded with a certain blithe dismissal by the Yishuv, the German Jews found their motives, their style, even their accomplishments all being called into question. The popular view was expressed in some of the classic jokes of the period. One is set at the very moment of arrival. A ship with refugees is in the harbor at Haifa and someone on shore imprudently calls, "Herr Doktor," at which half the people on board rush to the side of the boat nearest the dock, causing it to tip over. Another joke tells of a peculiar humming sound at a building project as the bricklayers pass hods of bricks from hand to hand. On coming closer the listener hears: "Danke schön, bitte schön—thank you, you're welcome"—at every exchange.

Two things are illustrated by these stories: the ineradicable middle-class manners of the refugees and the perception of the German Jews as being largely educated and professional people, and therefore out of their element in Palestine. "We were always taught," said one immigrant rather wistfully, after half a century in Jerusalem, "that punctuality is the politeness of kings." Yet here the hallowed verities were suspended.

There was also the suggestion of opportun-

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ism that underlay some of the doubts. Were they really as committed to Zionism as their predecessors from Eastern Europe, or did Palestine represent to them neither more nor less than Shanghai, a place to wait out the storm? David Ben-Gurion in a discussion with Martin Buber in 1949 attempted to smooth over the distinction between "necessity and idealism" by pointing out that even the earliest pioneers from Russia were also driven by necessity. "A Jew leaves his place of residence in the Diaspora because he is forced to do so, but he comes here because of a vision." A generous if not widely shared view. Shlomo Erel, an Israeli writer who himself is a German immigrant, has compiled some figures that show that the German Jews came and stayed in a higher proportion than other groups. But like all such good, reasonable figures, they have no effect on popular opinion. Once in Palestine, he demonstrates, the German Jews were steadfast in their commitment. While 25 percent of the immigrants to Palestine ultimately left for other countries, only 10 per cent of the German immigrants did so.

The most visible assertion of the German-Jewish presence was in the character of the cities. On the shores of the Mediterranean there suddenly sprouted the cafés and cuisine of Central Europe. Tel Aviv, which was founded in 1909, owes much of its shape and atmosphere to the members of the Fifth Aliyah, the wave of immigrants who came between 1932 and 1948 and who at the beginning were largely from Germany. The German Jews ran many of the shops and cafés that to this day line the great promenade of Dizengoff Street, although the menus are now more given to falafel and eggplant than to the coffee and pastries of the 1930s.

City life was changed in another respect as well, as the immigrants introduced new ways of retailing that were far removed from the market stall of the Arab world and the undercapitalized, understocked little stores of the East European Jews. Gerda Luft, a German-born journalist and early immigrant to Palestine, traveled to Poland in 1929 on a Zionist mission. Her visit to the Jewish quarter in Warsaw revealed something to her about life in the Holy Land. "On the Nalewki," she writes, "it dawned on me for the first time why the Nachlath Benjamin Street, for decades the most important business street in Tel Aviv, was so narrow and ugly. It was the translation of the Polish Jewish quarter into the Orient." The German Jews with the limited means at their disposal attempted to translate the glittering shopping avenues of Berlin and Frankfurt to that same Orient. It showed in the carefully dressed display windows, in the fixed prices, in the policy of service, and in the quantity and variety of goods they offered for sale. Single-handedly they turned shopping into the leisurely, recreational sport that it was in Western European capitals, where a stroll past display windows had become one of the entertainments of urban life.

The largest creation of the German Jews is the city of Nahariya, only six miles from Israel's northern border. Located on the seashore, it was the brainchild of a visionary engineer, Joseph Loewy, and was founded in 1934 as a commercial undertaking. Yet Loewy and the three other members of Nahariya Small Holdings Ltd. were no ordinary promoters, but a curious combination of Zionists, city planners, engineers, and agronomists. Because of its fine location on the Mediterranean, it seemed to them ideal as a beach resort. More specific were the plans of Dr. Selig Eugen Soskin, an early experimenter with hydroponic farming. He advocated small, intensively farmed plots that would produce late cash crops that could be exported to Europe. The aim of the company was to provide the new city-bred immigrants with fully outfitted farms together with advice on how to run them. In his search for settlers, Dr. Soskin took his maps and charts to Central Europe in 1938 to persuade Jews in Czechoslovakia and Germany that Nahariya was the answer to their question about where to go and what to do.

By 1941 Nahariya was a town of one thousand people with a landowners' cooperative, a town council, and a history of bravery as the northernmost Jewish town in the Western Galilee, and frequently under siege during the Arab violence between 1936 and 1939. Living sometimes in shacks and sometimes even in the wooden packing cases in which they had shipped their worldly goods, the refugees very rapidly gave even this frontier town a Central European character.

Most of the settlers originally intended to

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settle on the land, but one prospective farmer was unexpectedly forced back into his original profession. An eye doctor from Germany, he was besieged by importunate Arab patients who camped for days outside his own rather primitive house until they could see him. Neighborhood legend still celebrates his fairness and firmness in requiring an insistent effendi also to wait his turn.

As part of the development, the promoters laid out a grand central promenade leading to the sea, flanking the local river whose banks were planted with eucalyptus trees. This measure was not only ornamental but also prevented flooding. There soon appeared on this promenade the ironically named Café Penguin, which was no more than a collection of wooden chairs and tables under an improvised shelter. The small plot farming that enjoyed a certain success gradually gave way to the demand for resort accommodations as Nahariya boarding houses became known for their cuisine and their attention to detail—the vase of flowers on the dresser, the newspaper on the breakfast table. Above all, it was known for a level of service quite exceptional in those egalitarian days.

The strong German character of the early years, however, receded as the immigrants and their children learned Hebrew and as the postwar newcomers from Eastern Europe diluted the original character of the town. Today a museum documenting the early history of the settlement is maintained in a few rooms of the municipal building, largely owing to the efforts of a ninety-year-old immigrant. It contains some remarkable early photographs of Nahariya in the thirties, but seems to be of more interest to tourists from abroad than to local visitors.

What was distinctive about the German immigration of the 1930s was that it brought capitalism and middle-class values to Palestine on a scale hitherto unknown. In a society that in Palestine had been polarized for millennia between rich and poor, the German Jews were introducing a new element. The earlier waves of immigration of young, idealistic, and largely socialist workers had aimed to settle on the land, to live collectively, or, if in the city, they were imbued by socialist ideals and declared themselves to be members of the working class. At the other pole were the owners of the orange groves, the resident merchants, and other members of the privileged class whose way of life and whose attitudes differed sharply from those of the kibbutzniks.

A main division in the twenties was over the issue of cheap Arab labor, which was the mainstay in the operation of the large orange groves. The Zionists insisted that Jewish enterprises should be run only by Jews, an argument that found a new force in the thirties as immigrants clamored for work. Many founded their own small businesses. In 1936 the Jewish Agency surveyed one hundred industrial concerns operated by German Jews who had arrived since 1933. It reported that these enterprises together employed 1,743 workers with a capitalization of £500,000, or about $2,500,000. These are not overwhelming numbers in a country needing to find places for new workers. Yet they established a new scale between the few large factories and the many tiny one-man workshops. These enterprises stimulated employment for hundreds of additional workers in their supply line. Even more significant were the products that came out of these small enterprises. The list reads like a catalog of the basic paraphernalia of modern European life. But in Palestine in 1936, they were termed by the Jewish Agency "unlike anything known to local producers; such as: baths, pipes, files, screws, steel furniture, nails, batteries, typewriter ribbons, etc."

Those who found a ready place for their skills in the country were, on the whole, rarer than those who struck out into new fields, either as a matter of principle or out of necessity. A survey by the Keren Hayesod—the Palestine Foundation Fund—in 1939 showed how dramatic this turnaround was. Whereas only 0.7 percent of the German Jews who came to Palestine listed agriculture as their occupation, once there some sixteen thousand of the fifty-five thousand (or 29 percent) were in some branch of farming. The change was not only from urban to rural, but also from professional and mercantile occupations to manual ones.

Perhaps the hardest hit among the refugees were the academics and other intellectuals. In the 1930s there were only two institutions of higher learning in Palestine—the Haifa Technion founded in 1924 on German-Jewish initiative and the Hebrew University founded in 1925. The Hebrew University was as much a national center as a university since it housed

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the National Library and was dedicated to fostering and expanding the Hebrew language. And this was the one institution where Jews from German-speaking lands—Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia—exerted an enormous influence, shaping the curriculum and bringing the methods and standards of Western European scholarship with them.

How many could be employed, however, was severely limited by the small size of the university. In 1941 Hebrew University had 1,053 students. By contrast, there were 6,780 academics among the immigrants from Germany. It is not surprising that fewer than 1 percent ever found a teaching post at the university. Among the best known of the scholars from Germany in the humanities were the historian Isaac Fritz Baer, the philosopher Julius Guttmann, the sociologist Arthur Ruppin, the philosopher and historian Gershom Scholem, and the educator Ernst Simon. The first rector of the University, Hugo Bergmann, was a German-speaking philosopher from Prague who served from 1935 to 1938.

In the sciences the German refugees brought to Palestine, as they did to every country to which they came, their excellent training and also added figures of international stature to the tiny Yishuv. Among some of the notables were Ernst David Bergmann, an organic chemist from the University of Berlin who, in 1934, became the first director of the Daniel Sieff Research Institute in Rehovoth. At the Hebrew University were Ernst Wertheimer, a biochemist who did pioneering work in diabetes; Ludwig Halberstaedter, who specialized in radiology; and Samuel Sambursky, a physicist and historian of science.

The university was not the only resource for German-Jewish intellectuals, and a number of them managed to put some of their talents to use, notably in publishing, education, music, and the arts. The great German publishing firm of Schocken transferred its activities from Berlin to Jerusalem in 1934, and five years later, Gershom Schocken, the son of the founder, Salman Schocken, became publisher of the principal morning newspaper, *Haaretz*. The Palestine Symphony Orchestra was started in 1936 by Bronislaw Huberman who, although himself born in Poland, staffed the orchestra almost entirely with German-speaking refugee musicians.

In painting and sculpture, as in architecture, German-Jewish artists brought with them the revolutionary ideas of the Bauhaus to Palestine. A number joined the staff of the Bezalel School of Art, teaching a new generation by word and deed. Perhaps the most influential architect in bringing the modern European idiom to Palestine was Richard Kaufmann, who was born in Frankfurt and trained in Munich. He settled in Palestine in 1920 and designed many kibbutzim in the decade after his arrival. In his apartment houses in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and elsewhere, he was particularly attentive to working natural cooling elements into his design. The functional, unornamented style of the Bauhaus suited a country in a hurry to put up new housing, to build factories and commercial building, to lay out new towns.

Despite the major importance of the German Jews in developing all these fields, the one area where they were notably outsiders was where the power lay—that is, in politics. Were they outsiders because they were reluctant to enter the fray? Or had the power already been preempted by the earlier arrivals, the East European Jews? Certainly the political efforts of the German Jews were feeble. Gerda Luft argues that the German Jews simply could not have made any real headway. "Even if the immigrants from Germany had had political ambitions," she maintains, "they would have run head on against the opposition of the ruling group that came out of Eastern Europe. The political aristocracy of Israel Jewry was composed of the 'Second Aliyah' who had come to Palestine before the first World War. Since they determined not only the political but also the economic development of the country, they also made the decisions about the political forms."

While they may not have made their mark ultimately, in their early years in Palestine, the German Jews did make an attempt to have their voice heard. They entered a "German list" in the municipal elections in Tel Aviv as early as 1935, denouncing the corruption and rudeness of the bureaucracy and demanding better distribution of housing. It was not until 1942 that they organized their own party, the Aliyah Hadasha—the New Immigration—which lasted until 1948. At the formation of the Aliyah Hadasha, political parties were not just vote-gathering instruments, but repre-

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sented passionately held ideologies in a tense situation. As the party was organized, Britain was in the midst of a war fighting Hitler, but it was also preventing Jewish immigration into Palestine in order to placate the Arabs. Three years into the war, a majority of Zionists had lost faith in either the power or the intention of the British Mandate to establish a "Jewish national home" in Palestine. By May 1942 when an Extraordinary Zionist Congress met in New York, it adopted the Biltmore Program, which called for the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. Taking a very unpopular line, then, the Aliyah Hadasha rejected the Biltmore Program. It called for "respect for the rights of the Arabs" and hoped to see "a progressive liberal society" develop in the Yishuv—a statement that was nothing less than inflammatory. At the same time, it was an authentic expression of the ideals of liberalism that had shaped the underlying beliefs of the Jewish community in Germany and whose principles seemed no less valid in Palestine.

After the founding of the new state in May 1948, one German Jew achieved cabinet rank. Pinhas Rosen, born Felix Rosenblueth in Berlin in 1887, served as Minister of Justice from 1948 to 1961 and played an important role in shaping the new country's legal system. He acknowledged what he called the "idolization of East European Jewry," but insisted that "the immigrants from Central Europe have their own contribution to make to the emergence of a national culture." But these contributions were not often rewarded with visible posts or with power in the mainstream of political life.

Although German Jews and many of their children remain puzzled about their ambiguous position in Israeli society, it is not the sense of bafflement, but the sense of being almost outsiders, that is pervasive to this day among them. As an old immigrant reported, "A *Yekke* is someone who in Germany was called a Jew and in Israel a German." The key lies perhaps in the difference between expectation and reality. Coming from Germany with its advanced technology and high standard of living to a poor and struggling country, the German Jews naturally felt that they had a lot to offer with their education and their understanding of modern technology, commerce, and trade. It was only in a few places, however, that they could show what they could do. Yet outside of such enclaves as Nahariya, their work was simply absorbed, unacknowledged, by a needy Yishuv.

Along with its aging population, the German-Jewish past is slipping into oblivion. The generations born in Israel to German-Jewish families certainly have no doubts about their language and their country. Educated in Israeli schools, members of the Israeli army, they are an unquestionable part of Israel. In the cauldron of Israeli daily life, the triumphs, defeats, and accomplishments of the old German-Jewish community, both in Germany and Israel, fade steadily into the mists of remote legend. Because they share with most Jews a suspicion if not an aversion to Germany, it does not occur to the children of immigrants to make sentimental pilgrimages back to the German towns that were the birthplaces of their parents. And for those who do go, there is little left in modern Germany to nourish any genuine sense of connection. The cemeteries, which are a first stopping place, are often neglected and overgrown; houses and places of business, if they have survived the war, are now occupied by others. It is hard for a Jewish visitor to be calm in Germany, and dark thoughts disturb the search for the past. With the connections gone, it is the absence that reverberates and obscures the present.

The nineteenth century is safer. And in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, two newly mounted displays, side by side, show the emerging Israeli attitude toward the strangers in their midst. On the one side are a set of rooms showing a typical nineteenth-century German-Jewish bourgeois apartment: a kitchen and a formal living-dining room with the solid furniture, the fine china and silver, the books, the paintings, and, of course, the grand piano. In the next bay, we see the living room of an Iraqi Jewish family with costumed figures, low divans, Oriental carpets, beaten bronze and silver ornaments. The unmistakable impression is that the one is as strange as the other to the contemporary Israeli. But perhaps even this—the view from the Ethnography Department—is a step toward rescuing the rather buffeted Fifth Aliyah before it vanishes altogether.

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Requiescat, for My Father

WENDY BARKER

1.
No more travel
on this lake for now.
His boat has been stored and soon
the ice will begin to gather.
In the heaviest month
the men will come to cut the ice.
Great cubes. Lift them into the icehouse,
pile on pile, up to the roof.
Somewhere off Loon Island
his bones have been scattered.
Ashes, they call them, but
I know better. They will take a long time
to melt.

2.
Summer evenings on the screened porch,
breeze in the pines, clinking
of ice and sweet smell
of scotch from their glasses
while we sipped
ginger ale, tried not to argue,
allowed to sit with the grown-ups.
I had white socks, blue barrettes
clipped over my braids
and was beginning to know
how hungry I was
for dinner.

It will be a long time
before I can hear

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the jingle of ice in a glass.
I avoid groups, political
discussions, people who say they've
never been better.

3.
How many pieces of line left
at the bottom of the lake? Hooks
caught on rocks, lures
lost in the sand. And the last
great catch, eight four-pounders
he caught with Sam Howe,
a day in heaven they said,
until they found
that neither had secured
the stringer, the whole day's catch
gone back to the lake.
No story had ever been quite so funny,
and yet they had lost
the catch of their lives,
and it was my father's last.
But they'd had the day, he said.

All those soft places
under the lake, places he had only
found in the last few years,
his hair thin, silvery as the scales
of the small-mouthed bass
he had begun to learn

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how to bring up into the boat.
It tired him to clean them
down on the dock,
stooping over, but he wanted
to cook them for dinner.

4.
The ice is patching the lake
together, even now as I watch
cool shadows thread the fields.
We will leave the sandy bottom
alone for a while, the tenderness
of moss on rocks.

Let the ice crust.
By June, when we take the metal pick
to the chunk of blue ice
cut from the lake and stored
under layer upon layer of clean straw
we will turn and face
the wide water that stretches
to Red Hill, to East
and West Rattlesnake Mountains,
and we will
let the ice speak, in the glass.

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TRAVEL

Letter from Sicily

Mr. Sciascia Explains

DUNCAN FALLOWELL

It's rush hour in Palermo. Every man for himself—but when isn't it this way in Sicily? Nevertheless, Natale Maganuco, a young science student, is doing his utmost to get me to the office of Leonardo Sciascia's publisher on time, swerving down bus lanes toward oncoming buses, worming along side streets, cutting across traffic jams loud with horns. Sciascia is Sicily's most distinguished living writer. His books are short, clear, dryly sinister, containing the intelligence that circumscribes a mystery. Everyone is tipping him for the Nobel Prize. I missed him last week. I mustn't miss him again this week.

We are late. Natale triple-parks in the local manner. Inside the Sellerio office, after the din of Palermo (which Sciascia has called "the incurable city"), all is literary hush and feminine cool. The publisher is a woman—the strong, the sweet, the so-tired Elvira Sellerio, who never knowingly publishes a bad book. As far as one can see, her office is staffed entirely by women.

Baronessa Renata Pucci Zanca appears in red and black, arms spread wide. She hates my books but is very fond of me and will act as interpreter, because in Palermo there must be no misunderstandings. Shuffling about near a bookcase is Leonardo Sciascia. Apart from Natale and myself, he is the only man present, a slight retiring figure with yellowish wizened skin in a gray suit, looking older than his years (he was born in 1921) and looking very Sicilian—that is, very suspicious and very interested at the same time. We exchange greetings, after which he immediately picks up a book and buries his face in it, then looks out sideways with one sharp black eye. If he is worried—and his behavior suggests that to him peace of mind does not come easily—it is by something deeper than our late arrival (which doesn't bother him at all, a typical Sicilian courtesy). While we organize a place to talk, he wanders uneasily from room to hushed room, disappearing round corners, reappearing in doorways. Is it just shyness?

"Signor Sciascia, do you like the modern world?"

"No."

"You're a romantic."

"No. But perhaps a man of the eighteenth century."

"What sort of a family do you come from?"

"Small clerks."

"Petit bourgeois? Or something more?" interpolates Renata.

"Something less. My father was an accountant in a sulphur mine. I know the world of the sulphur mines very well. They were between Caltanissetta and Agrigento and don't exist any longer."

There is much that doesn't exist any longer in Sicily. Perhaps no region of Europe rejects more the stones of its past. The island has been devastated by cement. Here everyone wants to live in a new flat in a town. Virtually all of the old country houses and cottages (which are of wonderful design, color, and texture) have been abandoned and are in a state of collapse. The new developments are invariably haphazard, unfinished, and sur-

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rounded by rubble. When did Sicilians, who are spotlessly, even obsessively, clean inside their homes and in their persons, cease to regard the external condition of their towns as important?

"It is the problem of the managing class in Italy, which has no taste and no consideration for history—because it is not a managing *(dirigente)* class but a digesting *(digerente)* class." Natale laughs. The clever Sciascia wordplay is carefully explained to me. "It is an Italian, not just a Sicilian phenomenon. You should see the Adriatic coast—devastated. And it is almost the same story in Spain as in Italy—it started under fascism and continued with this new managing class after the war."

But like many Italian phenomena, disorderly speculative building appears to be at its most extreme in Sicily. Construction is a mafia-run industry. Despite a few theoretical planning laws, the mafia builds more or less what and where it likes. The tradition of violent abuse of people, which the mafia represents, also explains why few are tempted by the idea of returning to the countryside to renovate picturesque cottages. Sicilians huddle together in towns in flats as a way of overcoming their sense of vulnerability. This sense of physical vulnerability penetrates their psyche very deeply.

Sciascia is famously against the mafia. In 1961, when the existence of mafia was still officially denied, he published a short novel, *The Day of the Owl,* the first book to give a true picture of mafia.

"Since then I have been condemned to speak on this subject on every occasion," he remarks with a grim smile.

Sicilians don't usually use the phrase "the mafia" but prefer "mafia" without any article, indicating something less specific, more pervasive. (Or is this just the general Italian habit of dropping the article in conversation?)

"At this moment in Calabria," Sciascia says, "there are more mafia murders than in Sicily. But one talks always about the Sicilian mafia—especially because it was this form which was exported to America. Also the rest of Italy takes a sort of Stendhalian pleasure in this image of a violent, outlaw Sicily."

Ordinary Sicilians, too, can take a perverse pride in the mafia because it makes their circumstances in life appear dramatic. (Sicilians love drama—but who doesn't?) Mafia grows in this place not by actual force—which is only one, visible extreme of the phenomenon—but as naturally as does the prickly pear cactus. It prospers insidiously rather than blatantly. Mafia groups now control huge areas of business and agriculture in south Italy. Regional subsidies, including those from the European Economic Community, have often gone straight into mafia pockets. As Anton Blok has said, the central characteristic of mafia is the private use of unlicensed violence as a means of control in the public arena.

The terror implicit in a mafia-dominated region stifles initiative among ordinary people. As Pino Arlacchi noted in his classic study of the modern mafia, the typical mafia areas (Calabria, Sicily, and the Campania) have experienced economic stagnation or decline at a time when every other Italian region has been growing economically. Sciascia says that Sicily is only kept going by national and European subsidy. To those unfamiliar with the problem of massive corruption in daily life, it is hard to understand how a so-called civilized society can continue to allow itself to be terrorized by mafia dealings on this scale. We say, "Why doesn't somebody do something about it?" The answer to this question is, "Because mafia has entered the heart of the political system."

"What is the connection between mafia and national Italian politics?" I ask Sciascia.

"Votes. The mafia controls blocks of votes, and politicians need votes. Fascism was able to beat the mafia simply because there were no elections. Here we are, idly talking about the mafia problem. But we all know that the problem of mafia lies in the fact that the Christian Democrat party has had the power in Italy since the war. Nothing can really be done about mafia until the power changes hands, because the connection between mafia groups and the Christian Democrats is too well established. In Italy we had great men—but nobody listened to them. One was Gaetano Salvemini. He was a historian who was an exile in England during fascism, living in London. And he warned the Italian people that they should never give power to a Catholic party." The Roman Catholic Church, of course, has been in the business longer than anybody, and although it doesn't these days go in for physical violence itself, its representatives are often involved with those who do.

"Unfortunately," Sciascia continues, "the

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opposition parties in politics tend to be magnetically attracted to the leading party instead of being an opposition. We have no consistency of democracy in Italy of a ruling party and a checking party."

"Has the mafia ever threatened you?"

"Once. But you must not have fear, otherwise you'll never do anything. They wrote a threatening letter against me to the editor of *Il Mondo*. It was easily recognizable as a mafioso letter. But I didn't care about it—and I'm still alive."

He chuckles like a genial iguana, the tension lines in his face doubling with mirth. In such a world I wonder what the place of love can be and ask, "What is the Sicilian concept of love?"

"It spreads always over a small circle of people. We cannot talk of love for the universe, for humanity. The family, friends—this is where all possible love is poured."

"What qualities do you admire in a man?"

"Loyalty. Tenacity."

"And in a woman?"

"The same."

Appreciation of the *terribilità* in life is very strong in Sicily, which is part of its fascination for the northerner. Then there is Sicilian mercuriality, which is not whimsicality or capriciousness, but is rather perhaps a rapid moodiness, a readiness to express the contradictions in experience. Sciascia's face can change from "amused" to "grim" to "sad" very quickly.

Amused. There is something English in Sicilian humor, a dry sense of irony, a subtle and often masked playfulness, even the so-called capacity for what the English call taking the mickey out of—that is, acting teasingly towards—life itself. I was surprised by this and felt very comfortable with it. I don't find it in Italy.

"That's true," he says, offering round his cigarettes (no takers) and lighting up. "There's an Italian writer, Giovanni Maria Cecchi"—a Florentine wool merchant who wrote fifty plays—"who in the sixteenth century refers to the Sicilians' dry intellect. And our poet Quasimodo thanks his mother for the irony she has given him. But we have to divide Sicily into two parts. Western Sicily and Palermo has, I would say, a great lack of sense of humor." (It is interesting that Italians like to borrow the English phrase here.) "But the eastern, more Greek part has a great sense of humor that topples over into comedy, fun. The great players were always born in east Sicily. And the great writers. Like Brancati, who is one of our great comic writers."

"He was born at Caltanissetta, wasn't he?" asks Renata.

"No," replies Sciascia, "at Pachino. I believe he lived for a short time at Caltanissetta." Sciascia was born at Racalmuto—in the middle.

Like Ireland, Sicily has produced a far larger number of major writers than its location or size of population would suggest. The Italian language began here, in the school of lyric poetry at the court of Frederick II. It is truly a place for writers and esteems them—which may explain why Sciascia isn't dead.

Grim. Northerners tend to confuse an emotional nature with an open, honest one, but Sicilians often hide their true selves behind outbursts of emotion. One of the most noticeable Sicilian characteristics is their individual fear of what other people are thinking of them. This makes them secretive, suspicious, nervous in the midst of their glorious, compulsive symbiosis. They are capable of devastating sincerity—and of devastating insincerity too. Trust is very hard won—only after repeated testing—and even then there is doubt.

"Yes, yes, this is our uncertainty," Sciascia says. "We have no inner security, no self-assurance."

This uncertainty takes the edge off southern machismo and boastfulness, making the Sicilian a far more complex, subtle, and wily quantity than, say, the comparatively straightforward Neapolitan. Sicilian uncertainty is maddening—and very appealing.

"What is truth in Sicily?" continues Sciascia. "Pirandello speaks about truth as changeable, impossible to seize."

"Subjective?"

"It also changes objectively."

"So there can be no honesty here? Sicilians don't believe in objective truth?"

"But Sicilians don't believe in anything! Cicero said of us: people of very keen mind but suspicious, people born for controversy. This is because of our history as an island, the keystone of the Mediterranean. Everybody wanted it. And everybody has had it. Even in the last war, it was not necessary to land in Sicily first—maybe northern Italy would've been better—but no, they landed in Sicily first."

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Sad. What in his life has been the chief cause of unhappiness?

"Many things—apart from the domestic unhappinesses. The strongest has been the suicide of a brother of mine. In public matters, I was very unhappy when Stalin signed the non-aggression pact with Hitler, because I thought then that fascism would never end. I am unhappy today in seeing how badly Italy is governed, especially Sicily."

During the war Sciascia worked in an office for the requisitioning of wheat. I wonder if he is an Anglophile like his favorite modern writer, Jorge Luis Borges, and ask him what the English, generally speaking, represent for him. He tilts his head to one side, eyes narrowing to slits. One eye opens and twinkles, and he starts to speak in, as is his fashion, a series of soft, descending curves.

"Borges used to say that the world is divided into those who consider Waterloo a victory and those who consider it a defeat. I consider it a defeat. Because Italy must always be obliged to France and Napoleon for bringing us out of the feudal world."

I am hot and drink water. There is a heater on wheels near me and I turn it off, but Renata pulls a horrified face and says, "No, no, no, push it towards me!" Debussy's definition of unhappiness was "feeling too hot," but Sicilians, it seems, never know this. Natale offers Sciascia some water, but he wants only his cigarettes. He reacts to water not with distaste, rather more as if the stuff were simply alien to him—which somehow it seems to be. Time perhaps to change the subject. Does he find writing easy?

"Yes, very easy. When I want to write, I write."

And how would he describe his literary style?

"I'm not very fond of definitions. But the only style I aspire to is that of Manzoni—rational, direct, transparent."

The style may be very clear, but the content of Sciascia's books has something of the riddle, the sleight of hand about it. Usually he writes about crime, but this does not make him a crime writer. In Italy, especially in Sicily, crime is not so much an exceptional event as the touchstone for looking at the operations of society as a whole. This is not necessarily because the society of south Italy is more vicious than elsewhere. (I asked Sciascia if he thought Sicilian society more cruel than other European societies, and after a long pause he said no.) But there is a sense of Italian society being a brilliant improvisation upon the spiritual verities of life and death (and their earthly representations of family and church) rather than functioning within the verbal verities of laws. Carlo Emilio Gadda in *That Awful Mess on Via Merulana* (Italy's most influential modernist novel and sometimes called the Italian *Ulysses*) uses two crimes, a theft and a murder, as a way into the world of his characters.

In its disregard for the law, Italian society is the freest in Europe—but this brings its own form of oppression, especially bullying and financial corruption. Life in Sicily is a matter of intensity, not of justice. Sciascia protests against injustice, against the rule of fear, in documentary works as well as in fiction (he has written a controversial book, *The Moro Affair*, about the murder of Aldo Moro, president of the Christian Democrat party, by the Red Brigade in 1978), but does writing achieve anything?

"In improving our writing, we improve ourselves. But as far as external effects are concerned, I'm doubtful. Because there are so many different ways of reading the same book."

"If you understand that, then you are not a Catholic."

"I've been baptized—but I have no Catholic feelings."

"Is Sicily a religious place?"

"No, no, absolutely not! It's pagan. You only have to look at our religious festivals, which are very important here. But they are explosions of vitality, pretexts for riots, quarreling, drunkenness."

"Yes, especially at Caltanissetta," exclaims Renata. She seems to have a thing about Caltanissetta.

"But everywhere. And the cursing you hear during the religious festivals! Yes, there is an underground pagan feeling here. I'm attracted by it. A religion which is not a religion. This god living at three thousand meters above our heads. It's fine by me. There is a short story by Giovanni Verga, 'War of Saints.' Very interesting. The saints make war on each other through their followers. Do read it. It's been translated into English. But . . . translation is very difficult. I can check the translations of my books only into French and Spanish. They are . . . reliable. The best thing on translation was said by Cervantes: translation is the other side of a tapestry. Perfect."

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Despite his soft, slow, relaxed manner of speaking, Sciascia's face has a clenched look. The mouth is thin-lipped, and the words emerge as if from stiff jaws. The brow is creased with a permanent frown. There is a deep fold on either side of his nose. The eyes are held in a squint, half-shut as if against the glare of the sun. But there is no sense of strain or fatigue in the nimble brain.

"What makes you happy to be a Sicilian living in Sicily?"

"Happy? No. I'm not happy about it. Another Sicilian writer, Giuseppe Antonio Borgese, quoting the Latin poet, said of Sicily 'I cannot live with you, nor without you.' That's the general feeling of Sicilians. A good Sicilian detests and loves Sicily. A bad Sicilian loves Sicily."

The Fossil

ROBERT RICHMAN

The fossil bears the stamp of fin or leaf,
An ancient telegram in sunk relief,
Adjusting mankind's knowledge of the past.
Yet does it speak for that which cannot last?
We make the traces of a former time
Hard truths we injudiciously enshrine.
I think of what provoked the creature's dance
And not what's on the stone's etched countenance.

These trophies on display in gallery case
Are merely outward signs of an inner space
We'll never see and never can be known,
The soul of life which into life is sewn.
The fossil grabs our petrifying gaze
And leaves the real past in a fruitless haze.
Why not return the fossil to the ground?
Stop all this digging for what can't be found.

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The Powers of the Primeval Goddesses

MARY R. LEFKOWITZ

In the Greek myths that describe the creation of the world and the hierarchy of the gods, goddesses play a prominent role, either as wives or mothers or as permanent (and powerful) young virgins. In fact, the divinity who first emerges from the primeval void (Chaos) is not an omnipotent male deity, like the "Lord God" in the first chapter of Genesis, but the goddess Earth. She is the mother of the god Heaven, who becomes her consort and the father of most of her children—initially, the mountains, the sea, and the river Ocean who surrounds the sea. But Earth comes first not because the goddesses had some ancient priority over the (male) gods; rather, as the Greeks themselves understood the story, it seemed more natural to imagine a female conceiving and giving birth to something than a male. Motherhood conveyed certain privileges and some limited powers, but in all the myths it is assumed that the universe will be controlled by the (male) gods.

What, then, are the powers of the goddesses? The first, and in many ways most sinister, is the ability to conceive without male intervention. This power, even in a world dominated by male gods, can be used for destructive or retaliatory purposes. Night, like Earth the fatherless daughter of the grammatically genderless Void,

> bore Doom and dark Fate and Death; she bore Sleep and the race of Dreams; secondly black Night bore Blame and miserable Woe, having slept with none of the gods

—and this, according to the eighth-century B.C.E. poet Hesiod, is just the beginning of a long list of her baneful and fatherless children. According to an early hymn (composed perhaps in the seventh century B.C.E.), Hera, Zeus's sister and last wife, became angry at her husband because he swallowed Athena's mother Intelligence (Metis) and gave birth to Athena without her, while she (Hera) only was able to bear his puny and crippled son Hephaestus. "Can't I give birth by myself? Even though *she* (Athena) will be called *your* child exclusively by the immortals who live in wide heaven! Watch out; I may plan something evil for you in the future." She promises to bear a child of her own, without committing adultery or having intercourse with Zeus. She then leaves the company of the gods, strikes the earth with her hands and prays to Earth and Heaven and the other Titan gods beneath the earth to give her a "child apart from Zeus, in no way less powerful than Zeus himself." The child she bears is a monster, "unlike gods or mortals, fearful, harsh Typhaon, the scourge of mortals" (Homeric Hymn 3. 305–53).

The author of the Homeric Hymn does not need to explain in detail who Typhaon is because the Greek audience for this hymn would have known about him from Hesiod's *Theogony*, or "Birth of the Gods." Since Hesiod was regarded by the ancients themselves as the ultimate authority, he is not only the earliest, but probably our most reliable source for discovering how the Greeks themselves understood the myths of creation. Unlike us, the Greeks (men and women both) learned their myths from texts by individual authors, and not from books about mythology, at least not until the Hellenistic age, when Greek culture was adopted by peoples whose first

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language was not Greek. In the *Theogony*, Zeus defeated Typhaon after a long struggle, and only with the aid of the thunder and lightning that the Cyclopes, the sons of Earth and Heaven, made for him. Zeus threw Typhaon's burned and charred body into the depths of Tartarus, but because Typhaon is immortal, he still causes trouble: "from Typhos come the strong wet winds" that cause storms, unlike the favoring winds that the gods send to help men.

The myth of Typhaon indicates that, although Hera can make trouble for Zeus and the other gods by using her powers of unassisted conception, she cannot defeat Zeus and his established patriarchal rule. Neither could her grandmother Earth, in her time, assume power, even though she had come into being before her son and consort Heaven. Earth bore "starry Heaven equal to herself, so that he might cover her everywhere, and be the home of the blessed gods, always secure." Equal here means equal in size; in other respects, Heaven seems to have the power, which he uses to keep his children from replacing him. As Earth's consort, he begets children later known as the Titan gods, "all of whom were the most dreadful of children, and their father hated them from the beginning." His youngest son Kronos, the most dreadful even of these most dreadful children, hates his father in return, not out of some instinctive adolescent tendency towards rebellion (since adolescence hadn't yet been invented as a stage in human life), but rather because of Heaven's behavior: "As soon as one of them was born, Heaven used to hide them away in the depths of Earth and not send them up to the light, and he rejoiced in his evil work."

Earth, who is compressed by having her children stored within her, and moaning with pain, thinks of a plan of revenge. Using her powers of unassisted conception, she gives birth to the element grey "adamant"—a metal like steel, used only by the gods—and fashions a great sickle. But then, rather than trying to use the weapon in her own defense, she employs the second of the powers peculiar to goddesses: the loyalty owed by children to their mother. She asks her children, in Hesiod's *Theogony*, "Children of mine and of an evil father, please listen to me; we could take revenge on your father's evil outrage; he was the first to devise shameful deeds." What we see here is not the command of a matriarchal authority who could control her offspring by force, but a female who uses persuasion and rudimentary moral reasoning to get her sons to help her punish her husband. She speaks of Heaven's cruelty to her and her children as a crime; and it is because of this wrongdoing that her son Kronos promises to help her, echoing her words: "I don't care about my father—who doesn't deserve the name; for he was the first to devise evil deeds."

Kronos is eager to do what his mother wants, since it is the only way he can come "into the light," a term that usually means "be born," instead of being hidden inside his mother. In order to imagine the scene, it is necessary to think of these gods as being at the same time physical forces and anthropomorphic, and of the children of Heaven and Earth as being full-grown, even though they have not yet been born. Their peculiar situation dictates the form of revenge Earth chooses: since Heaven is immortal, they cannot kill him, even if they could somehow get out. Under the circumstances, castration (during intercourse) provides the most practical solution; nothing the poet says indicates that he had in mind Freudian notions of father-son rivalry, mother-son incestuous desires, or the envy that derives from female "impotence." In the *Theogony*, Earth, delighted with Kronos's promise to help, hides him, sets him in ambush, and puts the sharp sickle into his hands, and explains the whole plot to him:

> great Heaven came bringing on Night, and longing for love lay himself on Earth and spread out everywhere. Kronos reached out from his ambush with his left hand, and in his right took the huge sickle, long and sharp, and swiftly lopped off his father's genitals, and threw them so they fell behind him.

This last action indicates that Kronos knows he is committing a crime, because he tries to put the evidence out of sight where he cannot see its pollution.

Nor does Earth win control over Heaven or the other gods as a result of Kronos's attack. The bloody drops that fall on her make her pregnant, this time with the Furies, the Giants, and the Melian nymphs; from the genitals themselves the goddess Aphrodite is born. And Kronos takes over as ruler of the gods, though Heaven promises to get revenge for the crime committed against him. For a time, "history" seems to repeat itself. Kronos

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marries his sister Rhea, and she bears Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon, and Zeus:

> And Kronos swallowed them up, as soon as each came to her knees from her holy womb, with this in mind, that no one else of the proud sons of Heaven might have the honor of kingship among the immortals. For he had learned from Earth and starry Heaven that it was fated for him, strong as he was, to be overthrown by his own son, through the plans of great Zeus. So he kept a sharp watch, and swallowed up his children, and Rhea had unending sorrow.

Once again, the children's mother, this time Rhea, asks for help, and receives it, first from her mother and father, to avenge the crime Kronos committed against him and against her own children, and also from her youngest child, Zeus, who with her parents' collusion is hidden away, and a rock is given to Kronos to swallow up in his place. As soon as Zeus is grown, which takes only a year, Earth tricks Kronos into releasing his children, and Zeus subdues him with the thunder and lightning his Titan uncles gave him, because he set them free.

I have summarized and quoted Hesiod at such length to show how when a Greek poet tells the story of the birth of the gods, there is never any question of females taking charge, neither at the beginning nor any other time. In a brief modern summary of the story, Earth might seem to possess some independent authority, but, in Hesiod's account, her role is first to bear children and then to maintain, through her advice, general standards of justice that none of the male gods seem to want to abide by, at least until Zeus takes over the command. She and Rhea, not the male gods, are the first to request and plan how justice might be done. Perhaps because they are unable to take aggressive action, they wish to maintain order and balance. Since any religion reflects the moral attitudes of its adherents, it is possible to see in the characterization of these goddesses some reflection of the roles of mortal women in archaic Greece. The women in the *Iliad* also advise restraint on the part of their men, and encourage alternatives to the code of honor that leads the male heroes into increasing danger; it is primarily the women who are able to understand the full consequences of the war for its survivors, on both the winning and losing sides.

It has often been observed that the Greek succession myth follows the general pattern of the Babylonian creation epic, known in Akkadian as *Enuma Elish*, probably composed about a thousand years before the *Theogony*. The *Enuma Elish* was recited every year on the fourth day of their New Year's festival; like the *Theogony*, it celebrates the triumph of the present ruler of the gods, in this case, Marduk. The world had first been ruled by the primordial oceans, the goddess Tiamat and her husband Apsu; they quarrelled with the subsequent generations of gods, and Apsu was killed (in their religion gods could die) by Ea, the god of wisdom. Tiamat seeks revenge for the crime, and Marduk fights her in single combat and kills her. Because Tiamat fights on her own, challenges Marduk, and is willing to engage in single combat, she appears to be stronger than Earth in the Greek myth. Tiamat flies into a rage, recites a charm, casts a spell, and, as Marduk attacks with his net and the evil winds, she tries to swallow him; but then he shoots an arrow into her stomach and kills her.

In the Greek epic, by contrast, Earth survives to remain a power among the gods. Hesiod tells us that even after Zeus took over, Earth gave birth (with her brother Tartarus as father) to Zeus's most formidable opponent, the monster Typhoeus. In the Homeric Hymn, as we saw, Typhoeus (alias Typhaon) was the fatherless son Hera bore to get even with Zeus for giving birth to Athena. Hesiod does not say why, in his account, Earth, who had helped Zeus overcome Kronos, later produced Typhoeus to plague him. But Earth's action provides yet another example of the most elemental way in which goddesses can assert themselves in the Greek patriarchal system. In the *Theogony*, Earth also proves more impartial and impersonal than Tiamat in her revenge; when Heaven wrongs her, Earth gets Kronos to attack him; when Kronos wrongs Rhea and his children, Rhea contrives to preserve Zeus so that he can become ruler of the gods.

A fragment survives of another epic that has affinities with the *Theogony*; I am referring here to the Hittite text now known as "The Kingship in Heaven." It tells the story of how the god Kumarbi defeated the king of heaven Anu by biting off Anu's "manhood"; this action makes Kumarbi pregnant, with a number of important gods, but before they are born

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the fragmentary text becomes hard to read. Apparently the gods in Kumarbi's interior discuss with him through what opening in his body they should be born, a practical problem that is solved rather discreetly in Greek myth by having Athena be born from Zeus's head (after he swallows her mother), and Dionysus from his thigh (after he rescues the embryo from his mother's charred body). In the Hittite myth, Kumarbi combines in a single act the separate accomplishments of Kronos when he castrated Heaven and of Zeus when he swallowed Athena's mother, the goddess Intelligence. But most significantly for the purposes of comparison with Greek epic, goddesses like Earth (or Intelligence) play no role in the Hittite narrative; females are not needed either to give advice or for generation.

How and why did Hesiod's contemporaries worship the goddesses? The poet mentions, and in some cases briefly describes, who were the mothers, daughters, aunts, and wives of the principal gods, but he tells us in some detail only about the cult of one particular goddess, Hekate, daughter of the otherwise obscure god Perses and of Asteria, sister of Leto who was the mother by Zeus of Apollo and Artemis. In recent times scholars have been puzzled by the seemingly disproportionate amount of space Hesiod devotes to Hekate, a goddess who receives far less attention from other ancient writers, and, so far as we know, in cults in Hesiod's homeland or elsewhere in mainland Greece in the archaic period. It has been suggested that the lines were inserted into the text by some later writer; others assume that Hesiod was partial to Hekate because she was important in a local cult, perhaps brought to his home in Boeotia from Asia Minor by Hesiod's father. Certainly the cult as he describes it is different from what we know about her worship in later times, when Hekate is associated with witchcraft, magic, and the underworld. But whether or not Hesiod had particular personal reasons for including her, the description of Hekate is not out of place in his genealogy, or in his poem, since it provides yet another instance of the new (to the world at that time) and constructive justice of Zeus. Even if the lines were added to Hesiod's text by some later worshipper, they still illustrate the importance that a goddess can have in a basically patriarchal theology.

Hesiod includes Hekate and lists her powers at the end of his description of the children and grandchildren of Pontos, the Sea. Some of these Hesiod mentions only by name. But he says more about others, like Styx, daughter of Ocean, the "fearful" goddess who enforces the oaths of the gods, or Leto, who (in contrast to Styx) is "always kind, mild to men and the immortal gods, kind from the start, gentlest of the gods on Olympus." Leto is the maternal aunt of Hekate, and Hekate's father is another descendant of the Sea, Perses, who is remarkable for his intelligence. Zeus honors Styx and gave her large gifts and made her the oath of the gods because she was first of the old gods to move to Olympus and cooperate with him. Likewise Zeus honors Hekate more than all the gods and gives her "shining gifts and a share of earth and of barren sea"; she also has "honor from starry Heaven, and is honored especially among the immortal gods." Zeus's favoritism towards Hekate does not indicate that he was, so to speak, compensating in some small way for having taken over her once universal powers, any more than his honoring Styx means that she had been an independent force before he came along. Styx merely moved from a minor position under Kronos's rule to a major one under the rule by Zeus. Zeus also wishes to secure the loyalty of Hekate, who was born under the rule of Kronos, though, as Hesiod tells the story, only just before Rhea gives birth to Zeus's siblings and Zeus himself.

From Hesiod's description, it seems that Hekate's honors consist in large measure of what results from her dominion over men:

> Even now, when a mortal man offers fine sacrifices and propitiates her according to custom, he prays to Hekate, and great honor comes to him easily, and the goddess gladly answers his prayers, and gives him prosperity, since she has the power.

The poet is careful to add that Hekate has this power as a result of the respect of the other Titan gods who, like Styx, went along with Zeus, and the beneficence (once again) of Zeus: rather than give Hekate a smaller share of honor and gifts because she was an only child, and thus presumably had no brother to protect her, Zeus in fact increased her share. As a result, Hekate can help (if she wants to) kings administer justice, and (if she wants to) orators in the marketplace; she can bring victory in battle; she helps cavalry-

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men, and also athletes in competitions. Fishermen pray to her and to Poseidon: "The renowned goddess can easily grant a large catch, and can easily take it away again once it appears—if she wants to." Along with Hermes, Hekate helps herdsmen, whether of cattle, goats, or sheep; if she wishes, she can make a small flock grow large and a large flock small. And finally, Zeus made Hekate fosterer of all the human young who were born after she came into the world.

Of the honors given to Hekate by men because of her power over so many important aspects of their lives, only this last, being fosterer of the young (*kourotrophos*) would seem to us to belong more naturally to the domain of a female divinity. Not that Hekate uses it only to sustain, because she can also withdraw her support. Because the nurturing of children was so essential and precarious, the first and best portions of sacrifices were offered to the female divinities designated as "fosterers of the young" in other cults. Presumably it is this privilege that makes Zeus's gift to her of the title *kourotrophos* specially honorific.

Of Hekate's other, original powers, only two are shared with male gods: with Poseidon, she can help or hinder the work of fishermen, and with Hermes, the work of herdsmen. Of the rest—justice, rhetoric, war, cavalry, athletic competitions—Hekate seems to have sole charge. Why are no male gods involved? The answer may be that there is little point for a mortal man to pray to the war god Ares for success in battle, or even to Zeus himself, since they are not, for the most part, directly concerned with men's daily affairs, however much they might govern the general course of war or history. In the *Iliad* Zeus does not intervene on the battlefield, even to save the life of his son Sarpedon, even though he wants to. Aphrodite, however, rushes down to rescue her son Aeneas and in the process even gets wounded.

There is a difference also in the nature of Hekate's power. Hekate can help man or not help him, as she wishes, but she does not actively harm him; she "sits beside" kings while they administer justice, but she does not enforce that justice. Zeus, although he is the ultimate source of men's success or failure in many of the same areas of life, is both less susceptible to entreaty and less whimsical in his dispensations. He not only has more power, but he uses it actively to enforce his justice. We can compare to Hesiod's characterization of Hekate his description of Zeus, at the beginning (lines 2–8) of his other long epic poem, known to us as the *Works and Days:*

> Because of Zeus men are mentioned or not mentioned, spoken of and not spoken of, on account of great Zeus. For easily he makes a man flourish, and easily he strikes a flourishing man down; easily he diminishes the distinguished man and enlarges the inconspicuous man. Easily he makes the crooked straight and withers the proud man, Zeus the high thunderer who lives in halls on high.

Both Hekate and Zeus, because they are gods, do what is impossible or difficult for mortals "easily," but that is the nature of divinity, as Achilles says in the last book of the *Iliad:* "That is what the gods have spun as the fate of miserable mortals, to live in sorrow, while they themselves are without cares." But Hekate at least seems to listen when a prayer is addressed to her by a mortal, whether or not she wishes to grant it.

Although we may never know exactly why Hesiod chose to describe in detail the powers of this particular goddess among all the gods and goddesses of the generation before Zeus, the passage from *Works and Days* at least shows us how and why men as well as women would want to worship a goddess even though the divine cosmos, like the human world, is ruled by males. She is somehow closer to humankind, and while she does not have final authority (which is reserved of course for Zeus), she does not lack power. Like the Virgin Mary in some modern Christian cults, she has motherly qualities, but without sexuality, and she can be appealed to for help in a wide variety of human activities.

The gods in Hesiod respect those goddesses like Hekate and Athena who have elected not to marry, and goddesses who, having had children, remain celibate, like Styx, who comes with her children to live with Zeus, or Leto, or Demeter, or Earth herself (after Heaven has been castrated). Goddesses appear to be dangerous or destructive only while they are sexually active, as when Earth sets Kronos in ambush against Heaven, when he embraces her "longing for love"; or the goddess Intelligence, while she is bearing children to Zeus; or Hera in the

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Iliad, because she is still able to seduce Zeus in order to deceive him, so that he forgets his resolve to help the Trojans. Aphrodite, the goddess who Hesiod says was born from the severed genitals of Zeus, is always suspect, because she is so beautiful, and "genial" (*philommeides*—the poet is making a pun on *medea*, "genitals"):

> Passion followed her and fair Desire when she was born and first went to the company of the gods. Such is the honor she has from the beginning and the lot she has obtained among men and immortal gods, the chatter of girls and smiles and deception and delicious pleasure and sweet love.

Sexuality is regarded as dangerous not because it is physically unclean or polluting (as in Leviticus), but because of its ability to deceive. It affects the mind and warps judgment; Heaven, longing for love, did not suspect the ambush laid for him by Earth and Kronos; in the *Iliad*, Zeus is so attracted to Hera that he forgets about supporting the Trojan army against the Greeks.

Because sexuality is so closely linked to deception, Zeus uses it to punish man, to get even with the god Prometheus, who had deceived Zeus by stealing and giving back to men the fire Zeus had hidden from them. In recompense, Zeus devised "the likeness of a modest maiden," whom the gods bring to life and dress up and adorn with a golden crown, "a beautiful evil in return for a good":

> Both immortal gods and mortal men were seized with wonder when they saw this precipitous trap, which men could not escape. For from her is descended the race of women, a great pain to mortals, who dwell with men, and do not bear with them in cruel Poverty, but only in Plenty.

Hesiod compares the women to drones in a beehive, who live off the work of other bees and do nothing themselves; they are "conspirators in causing hardship." Once man has been deceived by sexual attraction, so that he eagerly accepts the gift of woman, he must work even harder than he has in the past in order to feed not only himself but his family.

Perhaps it is fair to say that, in the *Theogony*, Earth, Aphrodite, Rhea, and Hekate never have primary responsibility for the conquest of enemies, nor arrange the distribution of honors that the gods and goddesses receive. The gods who offer resistance to change and who defeat adversaries by force are all male: Heaven, Kronos, Zeus, Prometheus, Typhoeus. But in the course of his narrative, Hesiod does not let us forget that without the intervention of the female deities, nothing at all might have happened, or events might have come out differently; in fact, there might have been no world as we know it if Earth had not intervened to stop Heaven from hiding his children away, if Rhea had not asked her parents to help her find a way to stop Kronos from eating his children, and Styx did not enforce her oath among the gods. The goddesses can encourage, discourage, and direct the actions of the gods, even though they may not always take physical part in them. Their sexual attraction allows them to get their way without force, by deception so potent that Zeus can use it as an instrument of punishment, adding new hardship to human life. Once we remember not only *what* happened, but *why* it happened, we can begin to understand the power of the goddesses, even under patriarchy.

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The Old Buffer

WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD

THE ROYAL BEASTS AND OTHER WORKS. *By William Empson. University of Iowa Press. $20. Paper, $7.95.*

ARGUFYING: ESSAYS ON LITERATURE AND CULTURE. *By William Empson. University of Iowa Press. $45. Paper, $19.95.*

Since the death of Sir William Empson in 1984, in his seventy-eighth year, various collections of his essays have appeared, the first of which, *Using Biography* (1984) he had assembled before his death. This was followed, two years later, by *Essays on Shakespeare* (edited by David Pirie) and, just last year, by three further books: *The Royal Beasts* and *Argufying* (both edited by John Haffenden) and *Faustus and the Censor* (edited by John Henry Jones), a study of Marlowe's play. I haven't the scholarly expertise to pronounce on the *Faustus* book, but, with the exception of some essays in *Using Biography*, there is little in the posthumous collections that will add significantly to Empson's critical reputation. The two books considered here are both edited by his official biographer, who has written lengthy introductions to each. *The Royal Beasts* contains early unpublished and uncollected poems and fragments, a "fable" ("The Royal Beasts"), a "plan for a ballet" ("The Elephant and the Birds"), and three stories (termed a "one act melodrama"). Mr. Haffenden's biographical account of Empson at Cambridge—where he was dismissed after a college servant discovered contraceptives in his room and noted the visit late at night of a young woman—is of more note than the Empson items that the account is supposed to illumine. *Argufying* proves more substantial, and it is good to have these scattered pieces collected. But it reveals, to my eyes, less of Empson the great literary critic than of a man eccentric to the point of, not madness, perhaps, but maddeningness certainly.

Of course the eccentricity was there from the outset when Empson, as a brilliant twenty-four-year-old student of I. A. Richards, brought out *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, a book which (as Hugh Kenner said in a sentence that both gives and takes away) "reduced the passivity before poetry of hundreds of readers without imposing—or proposing—a single critical judgment of any salience." *Seven Types* is still a wonderful book to read (or to read parts of) with undergraduates who haven't yet quite seen what the language of poetry is capable of. If Empson never knew when to stop in talking about a line of poetry—reticence or tact were virtues he cared little for—he was engagingly willing to admit that perhaps he might have gone too far in the specific instance. Consider some remarks about Macbeth's lines (from act 3, scene 2) "Light thickens, and the Crow / Makes Wing to the Rookie Wood":

> Various similar sound effects or associations may be noted; there is a suggestion of witches' broth, or curdling blood, about *thickens*, which the vowel sounds of *light*, coming next to it, with the movement of stirring treacle, and the cluck of the k-sounds, intensify—a suggestion, too, of harsh, limpid echo, and, under careful feet of poachers, an abrupt crackling of sticks. The vowel sounds at the end make an increasing darkness as the *crow* goes forward.

If one didn't think about these things (and which of us did?), Empson's next sentence

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offered some reassurance—"But, after all, one would be very surprised if two people got the same result from putting a sound-effect into words in this way." And he proceeds to expatiate blithely on the difference between those rooks and crows that Macbeth sees through the window (Empson has him looking out of a window). Then in the second edition of *Seven Types* a footnote apologizes for the whole business he has stirred up: "It was stupid of me to present this example as a sort of test case, with a tidy solution drawn from the names of birds. Obviously the passage is still impressive if you have no opinions at all about the difference between crows and rooks. But it is at least a good example of a heavy Atmosphere, and I don't think my treatment of it was wrong as far as it went." With such a disclaimer, so vaguely put—how far *did* the treatment go, anyway?—who would bother to make a fuss about the overall oddity, if not irrelevance, of much of his commentary on Shakespeare's lines?

Still, I am extremely fond of these remarks about Macbeth's observation. Empson's commentary, whatever its truth—or its lack of a "critical judgment of any salience"—makes me pay more attention to Shakespeare's language, and it does so in part by acting as if it were legitimate, even necessary, to try out different ways of reading and listening. There is much of that kind of stimulation in *Seven Types*; at the same time one can't dwell very long on any page without losing—if one picked it up at all—the thread of argument. As I read paragraphs in this and indeed in any Empson book, my mind is constantly hazing over. What *is* he going on about? *Where* can he possibly be headed? *How* did he ever get *that* out of those lines? And yet his criticism—as he himself said about the experience of reading poetry—is "a taste in the head" that is unique.

My purpose here is not to consider the deficiencies in Empson's theoretical account of meaning and poetry (in this connection Elder Olson's rather devastating attack on it in *Modern Philology*, May 1950, is still worth looking up), nor to appreciate—as such critics as Christopher Ricks, Roger Sale, and Paul Alpers have done—the audacity and originality of his operations in the books that followed *Seven Types (Some Versions of Pastoral, The Structure of Complex Words, Milton's God)*. I want instead, taking my examples from *Argufying*, to show how an essential Empson—for me, I'm afraid, *the* essential Empson—is continuous with the young man who quoted "Light thickens, and the Crow / Makes Wing to the Rookie Wood" and went on enthusiastically about curdling blood, stirring treacle, the careful feet of poachers, and the abrupt crackling of sticks (not to mention the differences between rooks and crows).

You might call this literary character Wild Bill Empson, the man who would say anything as long as it seemed an amusing, possibly shocking thing to say at the time. In later life he liked to refer to himself as an old fogy or buffer: "When I was young I did not mind this . . . but I find now I have become one of the old buffers who are made fretful by it." But even as a young buffer, at age twenty-two, he published in the Cambridge magazine *Granta* a short review of George Rylands's *Words and Poetry* that concluded with the following paragraph:

> There is a charming introduction by Lytton Strachey, about Poetry being written with words, but it is a tiresome dogma; he would at once see through something a trifle more sophisticated, and there seems to be nobody who is teased when it is brought forward. In fact, all the bad poetry of the moment is written with words; I believe myself poetry is written with the sort of joke you find in hymns.

Surely this is the style of the buffer *terrible*, baiting Strachey with "the sort of joke you find in hymns," as if everyone knew what that was, or as if Strachey knew how to deal with hymns. There is as well the quiet bullying of *tiresome*, a word Empson grew increasingly fond of wielding against opponents. (Another favorite word was *suspect*, a verb that is used to usher in most extraordinary utterances, as if when one merely "suspects" something, anything is permissible: "Milton, one may suspect, was for most of his life what he was then called, a shallow-pated young puppy." We are unlikely to investigate whether or for how long Milton was really like that, when the "that" is so sensationally named—how wickedly amusing to think of the author of "Lycidas" as a "shallow-pated young puppy."

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the mind of a fit reader." The proclamation sounds eminently sensible, except that what goes on in Empson's mind, as he reads literature and other minds, seems rather more spectacular than is suggested by the modesty of "fit." Often the result is delightful, as when, in a review of some Robert Graves lectures, Empson takes on The White Goddess:

> I remember noticing in my twenties, when my mental eyes were peeping open, a rather curious tone about love taken at times by Peter Quennell and Edgell Rickword as well as Graves, authors unlike in every other way. They wanted to combat a fashion for male homosexuality among intellectuals, a thing which was becoming tiresome for the boys as well as the girls, and they did this by saying it was sentimental to love other young men (because so reliably agreeable and comforting) whereas any man worth the name would take on a woman (because she would be certain to crucify him after stripping him of all his goods). This has always seemed to me a farcical way to recommend normal life.

But surely the farce here—and a very amusing one indeed—is the work of Empson's style as it reduces Graves's sacred mythology to a strategy for dealing with a "tiresome" situation involving the boys and the girls. Without batting an eye, Empson puts himself forward as the sensible fellow with a purchase on "normal life," surrounded by very strange people recommending odd and abnormal practices.

Empson rides a number of hobbyhorses in *Argufying*, among which are his conviction that literary studies are falling prey to neo-Christian principles (there is much about this, of course, in *Milton's God*); that Imagism is nonsense, since it's good to argue (or argufy) in poems; that good poetry originates in mixed feelings; and that, in order to talk well, a critic doesn't need to theorize but rather to follow his nose. And Empson takes every occasion to express his annoyance at the critical doctrine that deemed it illicit or unnecessary to inquire into the motives behind a work of art. Here W. K. Wimsatt, with his "intentional fallacy" (which Empson calls, perversely, "The Fallacy of Intentionalism") was the villain. As a Christian, Wimsatt was suspect on two grounds, but I'm not convinced he deserves the following salute from Empson's 1955 review of *The Verbal Icon*:

> I have long felt uneasy about Mr Wimsatt's drive against what he calls the Fallacy of Intentionalism; it seems almost a behavioristic position and I am not reassured by the photograph he has put on the dustcover of this collection. He looks like a mastodon rising with dripping fangs from a primeval swamp. A generation or two ago he would have made as much effort to look winning and sympathetic, and really, considering what people in our profession undertake to do, that was a more sensible fashion.

Even for Empson this is extreme and, unless you are more dispassionate than I, you may find it difficult to proceed beyond his picture of the fanged mastodon and the joke (what is it exactly?) about "people in our profession," so as to assess objectively the merits and demerits of the issue at stake. Empson has opted for farce, and if I had been Wimsatt, I would not have felt justly dealt with, even if Empson's following remarks had been more telling than they appear to me to be.

A principal objection to Empson's handling of poetry in *Seven Types* was that—in dealing with a line or lines—too many associations were brought in without regard to "context" and with a sort of more-the-merrier attitude. An especially egregious instance of piling up ambiguities was his commentary on Shakespeare's line from the seventy-third sonnet, "Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang." In 1961 Empson returned to that line in the course of a puzzling discussion of prosody in a lecture delivered to the British Society of Aesthetics ("Rhythm and Imagery in English Poetry"). While making a point about what he calls "jammed stress," which calls for a more "emotive" reading when it occurs at the beginning of a line, he noted about "Bare ruined choirs":

> If we make it emotive, that is, if we make Shakespeare at the age of thirty squealingly indignant with the stealing clutches of time: "Why, but I can't be friends with an exciting young lord, like you; I'm a shambling old man, with no *teeth*"—then, whether it began as a joke or not, the two syllables become practically one noise:
>
> BEARRU ined-choirs where-late
> the sweet-birds sang.

Without trying here to assess the validity of the prosodic point as Empson so oddly diagrammed it, I would suggest that the reader has been effectively diverted from coming to

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any decision about prosody, since he's thinking instead—or perhaps laughing aloud, as I did—about this shambling thirty-year-old, acting like an old-fashioned poof whose "Bare ruined choirs" turn out to be empty gums. Those of sterner cast may be able to read this sequence, admit that Empson's paraphrase is perhaps slightly overdone, but keep their minds focused on the prosodic question. For me, the farcical poetry of the performance obliterates any plausible argument.

A related situation arises in his discussion of Cleanth Brooks's *Well-Wrought Urn* in which we are diverted away from Empson's "points" by his continually referring to Keats's famous Attic shape as a "pot." Assertions like the following crop up: "We turn back to the pot with a painful ecstasy in the final stanza. . . ." "And while we are in this peculiar condition is clearly the time for the pot to identify truth and beauty. . . ." "But we cannot suppose that the aphorism is merely dramatic, in the sense of being a suitable remark for a silent pot. . . ." "He wanted us to feel, I think, that the wise pot means a good deal more by its aphorism." Empson effectively demystifies the poem even as he sounds somewhat like the comedian Steve Martin or John Candy imitating a literary critic.

In so insistently making my point about Empson's excessiveness, I have been insufficiently appreciative of a number of fine things in *Argufying*. As always he writes wonderfully about Spenser; the *Ancient Mariner* essay has salient judgments about Coleridge; and my favorite piece in the volume is a BBC talk on Cowper's "The Castaway" where Empson proceeds stanza by stanza through that remarkable poem and identifies its profundity—"that somehow in the nature of things this is true about everybody, we are all in the same boat." That view of the poem never occurred to me, yet, once heard, seems inevitable. But my closing piece of Empsonian rascality—an especially outrageous, but also pleasing, example of old bufferism—surfaces in a letter quoted by Mr. Haffenden in his introduction to *Argufying*. One has noted a hospitality in deconstructionist circles to Empson's criticism, since unlike other New Critics he licenses multi-interpretive readings and likes to subvert and tease all orderly, "orthodox" accounts of poems and critical principles. A few years ago the English deconstructionist Christopher Norris (who went on to write a not very helpful book on Empson's "philosophy of literary criticism") wrote to Empson, encouraging him to read Derrida's works—to which Empson replied:

> I feel very bad not to have answered you for so long, and not to have read all those horrible Frenchmen you posted to me. I did go through the first one, in translation, Jaques Nerrida, and nosed about in several others, but they seem to me so very disgusting, in a simple moral or social way, that I cannot stomach them.

"Nerrida" and the others, Empson felt, "use enormously fussy language, always pretending to be plumbing the very depths, and never putting your toe into the water. Please tell me I am wrong." Wrong? One hopes Norris saved his breath and didn't even attempt to refine Empson's spelling of the Great Jacques's last name. If it is a distortion to say we read Empson for moments like these, they should nevertheless be recognized for their prominency, their frequency, and the singular satisfactions they provide.

That's Entertainment

BERNARD SHAW. Volume 1: THE SEARCH FOR LOVE, 1856–1898. *By Michael Holroyd. Random House. $24.95.*

Reviewed by JOHN P. SISK

Much of the late Victorian fiction reviewed by that failed novelist George Bernard Shaw was of the triple-decker variety—"a range of *magnum opus*," Michael Holroyd remarks, "now commandeered by biography." One might catch here, in this first of a three-volume work, the biographer's wry reference to the enormity of a task assumed in the mid-1970s, only one-third of which has now made it into print (one-fourth if we take into account the final volume of sources). The

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reader who begins this volume unconvinced of Shaw's enduring importance as dramatist and social critic may wonder why Holroyd didn't take as his models Richard Ellmann's one-volume biographies of Shaw's fellow Irishmen—Yeats, Joyce, and Wilde. After 486 pages, what will there be left to write about?

It is quickly apparent, however, that if a man with Shaw's genius and temperament got into the right places at the right time and lived long enough (he died at ninety-four, much to the surprise of those who had begun to expect that he would live forever) there would be plenty to write about. To put it Shavianly, he had the literary artist's biographical advantage of a loveless family background in a ménage à trois (an arrangement he was to repeat several times in later life), little formal schooling (the British Museum would be his alma mater), and an utterly uncongenial environment (Dublin) "which made me all my life a sojourner on this planet rather than a native of it . . . at home only in the realm of my imagination." The London he escaped to at age twenty (repeating the pattern of countless ambitious young men from the provinces) was an ideal exercising ground for his adversarial personality and provided the company (especially the Fabians) that supported him in his unremitting and always eventful efforts to improve a society whose politics, economics, drama, ethics, dietary practices, and orthography he thoroughly disapproved.

Thanks to the effects of such revisionists as Darwin, Marx, and Nietzsche, Shaw found in late Victorian London something like the nurturing counterculture that, according to Martin Green's *Mountain of Truth*, would happen some years later in Ascona, Switzerland. It not only provided the sanction and opportunity for his philandering nature (his premarital sexual activity will be a surprise to those readers who might have taken his puritanism too literally), but it tantalized his need to believe that he could play a major role in developing a race of men who would do good not out of a muddleheaded sentimentality but "in cold blood." Most important for such a compulsive didacticist, he found a society willing to be entertained by the accusation that it was in thrall to meat-eating capitalists, philistines, and idealists.

And he was a superb entertainer, whether as a peripatetic lecturer, pamphleteer, journalist, or playwright, who in the process experienced the didactic entertainer's familiar frustration: the better the entertainment, the less likely it was that consciences would be moved to corrective action. Archibald Henderson, an earlier biographer, marveled that Shaw could "hurl the most aggravating insults into the teeth of his audience" yet couched the insults in such amusing style that his listeners, instead of storming the platform in fury, "chuckled with delight and howled for more." Shaw, says Holroyd, was aware of this problem: the public whose ear he sought heard "only the voice of an Irish paradoxer who did not mean half of what he said." This, of course, could induce an uneasiness in those who found him unexpectedly on their side of the argument: they might with little warning find him elsewhere. The Soviets, for instance, were delighted in 1931 to have his endorsing presence among them, but a writer for *Izvestia* was still apprehensive, knowing Shaw's tendency to "sometimes execute some amazing zigzag . . . indulging in witticisms at our expense."

Holroyd makes it easy to understand that apprehension. Shaw was a prisoner of a style constructed to make his way in a society that would not be fit to live in unless it was radically reconstructed. That style, says Holroyd, "is always in top gear: emphatic, industrious, omniscient, studded with surprises." In effect, it was a substitution of literature for life, and its "whirling informality" could leave one "exhilarated, intoxicated, breathless and, before the end, exhausted." Still one of the best places to get the effect of this style is in the famous prefaces, in the 1965 edition of which (about seven pounds and nearly a thousand double-column pages) one can read Shaw's introductory remark that he finds them "still rather ahead of the times than behind them." Here is the kind of witty writing that the great Augustans admired; Alexander Pope might have been put off by Shaw's high-spirited anti-Catholicism, but he would have found little reason to put him in *The Dunciad*. The attempt to dazzle is unremitting, but unless the reader is willing to take Shaw at his own evaluation, the flashing perversities and paradoxical tics can wear him out. I found this to be the case with the production of *Pygmalion* I saw a few years ago in London. The cast, including Peter O'Toole as Henry Hig-

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gins, was excellent; but by the end of the fourth act I was willing to believe that when the play became infected with the spirit of romance and turned into the Academy Award–winning *My Fair Lady* the change was for the better.

Shaw, says Holroyd, "defined romance as extended immaturity." Nevertheless, as he seems to have been aware, there was a romanticist in him, along with an idealist and anarchist, that he could never completely suppress. This is apparent in his relations with women, especially in his letters. The spirit of romance, of course, threatened his autonomy as an artist. In this circumstance the Shavian style was his armor. It made possible (most of the time) a safe degree of intimacy: it made women dependent on him and at the same time deprived them of their sexual power over him. According to Holroyd, "He excited interest: then ran." His championship of the New Woman (he prided himself on having done more than anyone to "knock Woman off her pedestal and plant her feet on the solid earth") was itself a survival ploy. Insofar as she existed, she needed no one else to fulfill herself and therefore was a guarantee against the romantic entrapment that threatened his art. His relations with Ellen Terry, whom he did not meet for some years after they began their great correspondence, was ideal for him. She could be at once a muse and a New Woman whom he could safely put back on the pedestal. But then along came Charlotte Payne-Townshend, to whom, after much agonizing, he became very compatibly married, and the Fabian philanderer would go no more a-roving.

In politics, as in love, Shaw, like so many literary intellectuals, was an aesthetic totalitarian whose model for a rationally ordered society was that triumph of style, the successful work of art. A public that could not distinguish between good drama and sentimental trash could hardly be expected to manage its political affairs. He observes in the preface to *Androcles and the Lion* that in the most modern republics democracy "is an imposture and a delusion." Shaw found it everywhere stylistically messy, and nothing he learned from his six-year involvement with municipal London politics induced him to change his mind. So at

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various times he was an admirer of Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin: being, like good playwrights, suspicious of all muddleheaded sentimentality, they got the job done. Stalin was especially to be commended for having organized a society in which not only were the prisons comfortable and the children healthy but a visiting vegetarian could find plenty of good porridge and black bread.

Shaw's flirtation with the totalitarians is, of course, matter for a future volume, but there are plenty of signs of its inevitability in this one. He had the totalitarian's impatience with the human being's capacity for mismanagement and self-deception, and the totalitarian's preference for the indicative and imperative modes over the qualifying and tentative subjunctive. He never doubted that he was an instrument of the Life Force qualified to give advice to anyone on any subject, including the operation of the typewriter and the preparation of oatmeal. Thus his *Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism* was not only propaganda for the great good cause but an intelligence test for women that they could only fail by refusing to agree with it. When on occasion he was proven wrong, he could rely on his entertainer's style not simply to save face but to use an admission of accidental fallibility as a reinforcement of his authority. Shaw's brilliant style, as Holroyd notes, could also be a means of evading the truth in the interest of simplification and peace of mind. Sometimes, as Shaw's paradoxical friend G. K. Chesterton put it, it could be the consequence of failing to take into account the full complexity of life.

This was ultimately Shaw's judgment of Marx. The encounter with Marx in the British Museum, Shaw said, turned him upside down and "provided me with a purpose and mission in life." The conversion from individualism to collectivism and the commitment to Fabian socialism, with its vision of a non-violent permeation of society, followed naturally enough. Even for some of his admiring contemporaries, of course, the idea of a Shavian collectivist was an oxymoron. Shaw's concern for the poor and powerless was unquestionably genuine, but he needed to feel that he was in control of a situation, not a sensitive reed through which some impersonal dialectical process worked—just as in his philandering he needed to feel that he was not in danger of losing the control he needed for his serious work. So he and Sidney Webb were happy to reject Marx's oversimplifying "automatic history," which had no place for the human will in the project of world improvement and threatened to leave the persona Shaw had so painfully constructed without significant occupation. What collective could have tolerated a style so prone to unpredictable zigzagging?

Holroyd's attitude toward this master stylist, "who had an air of knowing what was good for people, like an omniscient head waiter," is itself expressed in a stylish mastery of an immense amount of material. He avoids the oversimplifying excesses of the hagiography and pathography to which biographers of much less complex and dazzling subjects are so often driven nowadays in the interest of demonstrating their own mastery. I occasionally regretted the absence of the sources that are still two volumes away, but perhaps the decision to delay them will prove in the end to have been the right one. The important thing is that Holroyd is judicially fascinated by Shaw, a truly memorable man even though in so many of the matters most dear to him the times have continued to zigzag along perversely as if he never existed. Perhaps his greatest usefulness to us now (and it is no mean service) is that he demonstrates, often to the pitch of high comedy, the limits to which the self-constructed personality can go. Holroyd's first volume is the best possible advertisement for the rest of the story.

The Critic in the Garden

THE PILOT AND THE PASSENGER: ESSAYS ON LITERATURE, TECHNOLOGY, AND CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES. *By Leo Marx. Oxford University Press. $29.95.*

Reviewed by PAUL LUKACS

According to the adage, history doesn't repeat itself but historians often do. Leo Marx is a historian who writes about the literary representation of American culture, and in this collection of previously published essays he

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indeed repeats himself. That is not necessarily a criticism. Early in his career Marx discovered a figure in the carpet of American intellectual life that helped him make sense of a number of classic American books, and for close to forty years now he has been writing almost exclusively about it. Put simply, he contends that American literature reflects a dialectical conflict between a pastoral ideal and a technological reality, one figured in the title of his influential book of 1964, *The Machine in the Garden*. Whether the machine be locomotive or steamship, thresher or telegraph, Marx wrote back in 1953, "the motif recurs in our literature from *Walden* to *The Bear*." It forms a "bipolar image," he declared just last year, one that functions as "a primary ordering principle" or "central figurative conception" throughout the whole of American life and letters. The nineteen essays collected in *The Pilot and the Passenger*, his latest book, all focus upon some aspect of this same conception. The essays span Marx's career and thus trace the development of his thought. Yet there is, finally, very little development in them. This is not because Marx understandably enough repeats himself. It is instead because his singular focus leads him to suggest, albeit unintentionally, that history actually repeats *itself*. He insists on seeing the American carpet's essential figure as unchanged and unchanging, and consequently he tends to ignore the whole of a rug that over two hundred years has been altered and at times even rewoven.

Marx shares the notion that a dialectical conflict lies at the very heart of American experience with historians and critics who form what he calls "the myth and symbol school" of American studies. The central assumption of that "school" is that any culture embodies conflicts that are represented by the significant art of the time. Lionel Trilling, whom Marx acknowledges as one of his intellectual forebears, gave that assumption its almost classic formulation when he argued that since certain artists embody the very essence of their culture, their meaning and power lie in contradictions rather than conclusions. "It is a significant circumstance of American culture," wrote Trilling, "that an unusually large proportion of its notable writers of the nineteenth century were such repositories of the dialectic of their times—they contained both the yes and the no of their culture."

Marx quotes this statement approvingly. For in his view, the conflict that echoes throughout American literature is always a conflict between just such affirmation and resistance. On the one hand, images of the machine represent the world view of "the dominant culture" with its faith in "rapid industrial development"; on the other hand, images of unspoiled nature represent the vision of "a dissident minority" that "recoil[s] from industrialization." It does not much matter whether this conflict occurs at sea or on land, in the eighteenth, nineteenth, or twentieth century, in *Song of Myself* or in *The Great Gatsby*—to Marx, it is always the same: the dominant culture's cry of "yes" affirms America's conquest of nature while the minority's call of "no" resists it.

The problem with this formulation is that both "the dominant culture" and the "dissident minority" in America have changed, and changed radically, over the course of two centuries. And as they have, so too the very meaning of the conflicts between them have changed. Marx may well be right in arguing that these conflicts are ultimately between technological realities and pastoral ideals; he undoubtedly *is* right in noting that they often are figured as such in important American books. But he is wrong when he suggests that one model of the conflict, that between a technological "yes" and a pastoral "no," repeats itself throughout American literature. Indeed, few of the books he cites, considered by themselves, follow this model. Thoreau, for example, does not simply condemn the locomotive that "shakes the earth" beside Walden Pond; instead, he wonders whether the men who built it will ever be "worthy to inhabit it." And Faulkner does not indict the railroad's movement through the forest in *The Bear*; since the forest serves as a setting for the play of insanity as well as pastoral bliss, he considers it instead an emblem of inevitable change.

Change is exactly what Marx's insistent focus upon one model ignores. The aim of his method, he writes in the introduction to these essays, "is to suggest how the dialectical concept of culture can help to map historical terrain." Yet with a dialectic composed of thesis and antithesis but never synthesis (and

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never new thesis or new antithesis), Marx often fails to account for the complexity of his own subject. He correctly notes the pervasiveness of a rhetoric that locates cultural ideals in nature as opposed to history, but he fails to note that this rhetoric has been employed by dominant and dissident cultures alike. From Thomas Jefferson through Theodore Roosevelt to Jimmy Carter, just as from James Fenimore Cooper through Henry Adams to Robert Penn Warren, a distinctly pastoral vision of America has been proclaimed an essential aspect of the national experience. Yet at the same time a vision of material progress has been proclaimed equally essential. Thus neither an image of the machine nor an image of the garden truly represents America's "yes," just as neither truly represents America's "no." Instead, both form a complex whole that holds the opposed calls of affirmation and resistance in an uneasy and always changing balance.

Marx sometimes ignores the reality of that balance. For example, he objects to the ending of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* on the grounds that what happens to Huck in the final chapters runs counter to what happens to Huck and Jim on the river. Yet he is not content to argue that the ending jeopardizes what comes before it. He insists instead that it "jeopardizes the significance of the *entire* novel," suggesting that in his eyes the entire (or "real") *Huckleberry Finn* ends twelve full chapters before the novel's last page. His method, then, provides him with a clear and coherent reading—but only if he stops reading once his method stops working.

That Marx's dialectical method sometimes does stop working does not in any way invalidate his important observations. Along with other members of the "myth and symbol school" who gained prominence in the 1950s and early 1960s, most notably R. W. B. Lewis in *The American Adam* and Henry Nash Smith in *Virgin Land,* Marx champions a contextual approach to the classics of American literature. That approach pays special attention to what he calls "the logic of metaphor," a logic that is itself a function of language, no matter whether the language is found in a political speech or a poem, a newspaper or a novel. Many of the early essays Marx collects in *The Pilot and the Passenger* argue for the necessity of connecting the language of literary art to the language of society; and throughout the book, he insists that the myths and symbols that echo throughout American literature belong not to literature in isolation but rather to the culture as a whole.

Despite its flaws, Marx's method compels him always to think of culture as "a cognitive, meaning-generated concept," and always to emphasize the essential interdependence of art and society. Such thinking was something of a novelty in American literary studies when Marx began writing, and ultimately his emphasis is more important for what it illuminates than for the specifics he reports seeing. He suggests that the often-debated choice between "respect for the aesthetic integrity of works of imaginative literature" and "recognition of their embeddedness in culture" is both unnecessary and false. All the essays he collects in this volume testify forcefully to the truth of that suggestion.

If works of imaginative literature are embedded in culture, so too are works of scholarship, and the most interesting thing about *The Pilot and the Passenger* is the depth of its author's confessed cultural bias. Marx's reading of American literature as essentially resistive is open to debate; but what is not up for debate, what he freely admits, is that reading's politically leftist basis. In the final essays, he writes about F. O. Matthiessen, Susan Sontag, and Irving Howe, critics on the left whose work reveals what he considers "the difficulties that beset those who try to fashion a responsible, consistently critical, radically democratic cultural criticism in the United States." Since Marx quite clearly considers their effort to be essentially his own, their difficulties are his as well. He discusses the most vexing such difficulty in an essay written in preparation for the national bicentennial in 1976. "How and why," he asks, "[did] we become distracted from those generous revolutionary ideals once represented by the native landscape? What may yet encourage us to change direction and complete our uncompleted revolution?"

Those questions reveal in microcosm the strengths and weaknesses of his latest book. On the one hand, Marx's insistent focus upon the correspondence between language and landscape illuminates many of the enigmas and conflicts at work in the American literary

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imagination. On the other hand, his insistence that American society has betrayed American ideals distorts those conflicts so that they can fit his imposed paradigms. These paradigms reflect a bias that ultimately leads him to call for an "ideology of pastoralism." Yet what Marx does not see is that in order for the pastoral impulse that he rightly considers essential to the American imagination to become an ideology, a *system* of belief, it would have had to serve history and the machine as well as nature and the garden. Most important, what he does not see is that for more than two hundred years, in shifting forms and changing patterns, from Jefferson to Reagan, Crèvecoeur to Updike, it has done just that.

Legal Culture

FAILURES OF THE LEGAL IMAGINATION. *By Alan Watson. University of Pennsylvania Press. $24.95.*

Reviewed by MARC M. ARKIN

It has always been a cherished belief of mankind that properly drawn laws will lead to a rightly ordered state. The import of Alan Watson's recent work, *Failures of the Legal Imagination*—and, as far as I can tell, of much of the rest of Watson's rather extensive oeuvre—is that this belief, while correct in theory, is misplaced in practice. The book, which derives from a lecture series delivered at Northwestern University School of Law in the fall of 1987, is for the most part devoted to ringing the changes on the thesis that, although "legislation can be the most radical mode of changing law . . . its history in the Western world is largely one of a failure to make anything approaching the use of its potential." This, to Watson, is the paradigmatic "failure of the legal imagination." Of course, depending on one's point of view—and who is doing the legislating—these lost moments of governmental initiative are either opportunities missed or disasters averted.

The book itself follows the thread of Watson's argument into some rather unlikely places, including chapters on "Medical Malpractice Law in Ancient Rome," "Legal Evolution and Legislation" (treating, inter alia, private law in the late Roman Republic and sixteenth-century England), and "The Law of *Delict* and *Quasi-Delict* in the French *Code Civil*." When Watson tells us that he "can only work from specific examples," he is not speaking idly. The range of examples is impressive. Unfortunately, when examples are made to do in place of logical argument, it is difficult precisely to identify the author's claims, much less to evaluate them. Thus, in chapter 2, Watson tells us that he hopes to show that forces have operated throughout Western history "to restrict the creativity of legislation and to inhibit it from directing society along specific and detailed lines desired by the political elite." In chapter 6, he observes that rulers generally do not care about the private affairs of their subjects and therefore do not legislate in that area. Either they care and are thwarted, or they don't care and it doesn't matter. You can't have it both ways.

One further caveat before plunging on: provocative and interesting as it is, Watson's book was written for the scholarly rather than for a general audience. My guess is that the average reader, even a very well educated one, will have some difficulty jumping from the *lex Aquilia* (a Roman law code of roughly 287 B.C.) to the Statute of Uses (a British law of 1535 abolishing the difference between legal and equitable estates), to the works of continental jurists, all in the space of 156 pages. Rarely, and certainly not in the otherwise extensive endnotes, is the general reader supplied with sufficient explanatory background. In fact, one has the sense, common to much of British academic writing, that one is eavesdropping on a deeply urbane conversation and that it would be in the worst possible taste to interrupt in order to admit ignorance of such a well-known topic as the legislative workings of Roman government in the late Republic.

According to Watson, his studies demonstrate that law is largely independent of the economic and social structure of the society it governs. (To understand how striking this claim is, one need only turn to Lawrence Friedman's *A History of American Law*, a standard text, and note that the chapter on

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commerce and trade in the nineteenth century ends with the offhand remark that "sentiment and tradition had little place in commercial law; what survived was the fit and the functional.") As Alan Watson explains, the disjunction between law and social structure results from the fact that law is generally made by lawyers. (Watson does not always distinguish between law and legislation.) Because of their immersion in legal culture, lawyers rely on certain materials when drafting legislation or attempting to fill the gaps in their legal systems. Chief among these are existing legislative codes; codes are accessible, wear the halo of existing authority, and have already governed effectively somewhere. Thus, Watson argues, lawyers reflexively borrow provisions drawn from established codes regardless of the needs of their own society. Once the borrowed legislation is enacted, it assumes an authoritative life of its own, becomes virtually impossible to displace, and is passed on to the next borrowing legislature, anomalies and all.

Watson's views are clearly a product of his preoccupation with legal transplants, and, in particular, with the "Reception of Roman law in the west [*sic*]." (They may also reflect a fondness for minimalist explanations; late in the book he purports to derive the entire development of the common law from a mere three "principles.") The "Reception," which Watson describes in detail elsewhere, resulted from the rediscovery of Justinian's *Corpus Juris Civilis* and its inclusion in the curriculum of the University of Bologna in the eleventh century. From Bologna, the foremost law faculty of its day, Roman law and legal categories spread throughout Europe, displacing existing law, and providing Watson with his fundamental model of legal development.

Thus, Watson argues, the French *Code Civil* of 1804 appropriated Roman legal doctrine in the field of torts (that is, civil wrongs) without regard to whether these rules made any sense in nineteenth-century France. Moreover, since the legislators raided Roman law piecemeal, they created a system of liability that was internally inconsistent, enacting conflicting rules involving responsibility for the wrongful acts of others. On the one hand, influenced by Roman provisions regarding liability for the wrongs of dependents, the French made owners absolutely liable for any harm caused by domestic animals. On the other hand, following a different Roman law governing the liability of a householder for injuries caused by objects thrown out of windows, the French made masters responsible for the wrongful acts of their apprentices only if the masters had failed properly to supervise their charges.

This last claim provides a valuable insight into Watson's historical method, since he introduces the point with the following aside: "I wish to interject that it would be truly amazing, would it not, if the formulation here in the *code civil* resulted from the Roman *actio de effusis vel deiectis* ['action for pouring out or throwing down'] and *actio de positis ac suspensis* ['action for placing or suspending']? Yet that is what I want to show!" (Translations are Watson's in the original text.) After all, if even Watson finds his argument a matter to strain credulity, what is the reader to think? To compound matters, Watson suggests that the French might have gotten the law right if only they had modeled their code on the *lex Aquilia,* although both the reason for this omission and the merits of the *lex Aquilia* remain obscure to this reader.

Be that as it may, Watson contends that there is no rational explanation for distinguishing between animals and pupils—although one might suggest that pupils have greater free will than oxen—and that the French legislators did not even bother to try. He also notes that this odd pairing of rules became firmly embedded in the law and, through borrowing, entered the codes of the kingdom of Sardinia (1837) and the Dominican Republic (1845, and in place to this day), and, with minor alterations, the *codice civil* of Italy (1865).

Nothwithstanding this parade of legal curiosities, Watson's underlying position is unsatisfying. First of all, he explicitly restricts his argument to private law; that is, to law that governs the relations of individuals with one another, as distinct from public law, which comprises the regulatory apparatus of the modern state. It is questionable whether legislators routinely ignore economic and social conditions when they draft such public laws as those involving economic regulation and welfare issues. To take a random example, anyone familiar with the 1934 Securities Exchange Act knows that the drafting Congress

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was acutely aware of the structure of the capital markets. The sweeping social changes reflected in the modern welfare state undermine the current validity of Watson's fundamental premise. Moreover, Watson stacks the deck since private law is the most attractive field for legal transplants. As Watson admits, in areas of Europe that had been under Roman rule, customary law was shaped by Roman law; elsewhere, private law practices were at least superficially similar to those of the Romans and therefore likely to be interchangeable.

Watson's position may be limited not merely to private law, but to private law in civil law jurisdictions. The division between civil law, which relies on written codes as the primary source of law, and common law, which is based on judge-made decisional law, is fundamental to Western legal culture. Watson—like many Scots—has strong civilian leanings. Thus, he fails fully to recognize that anomalous legal transplants are more likely to occur in a system that is based on legislation. When judges make law by resolving disputes and changing legal rules—through a process of incremental adjustment—to meet the needs of the parties to those disputes, there is less need for borrowing. While law in such a society may be primarily reactive, there is less likelihood of a disjunction between law and the social order than in a society that derives its legal system a priori.

If Watson's thesis proves too little, it also proves too much. Watson contends that the same intellectual constraints imposed by legal culture are imposed by philosophical tradition. Thus, in a chapter entitled "Natural Law and English Legal Positivism," Watson claims that the received tradition of English legal thought caused English legal philosophers to focus on formal issues—what constitutes a "law"—rather than on what, to Watson, are more significant jurisprudential questions, such as the meaning of authority. This simply points up the truism that any intellectual tradition restricts both the questions a thinker poses and the answers he gives. But then, does Watson's work tell us anything except that law functions like any other intellectual culture?

It seems to me that if there is anything unique about legal culture, it must lie in the law's mechanism for accommodating its own dysfunctions. Yet, having laid the groundwork, Watson gives this subject short shrift. He calls the mechanism for accommodation "legal opportunism," which he describes as the manipulation of legal categories by individuals in order to meet their needs. His chief example of this stretching of legal categories is the ancient Roman ceremony of *mancipatio*. At first a rite to mark the transfer of objects, Romans later used *mancipatio* to create and transfer an easement in real property, create a security interest, put a wife under the control of her husband, adopt, free a child from parental power, change the status of a woman to permit her to make a will, and make a will appointing a tutor or guardian.

It is therefore ironic that Watson is so critical of the judge-made rules of the common law. What, after all, is legal opportunism but another name for the common-law mechanism of lawmaking through analogical reasoning in the context of individual cases? Watson's discussion of legal opportunism implicitly recognizes this, being repeatedly crowned with an approving citation to the great English legal historian, C. W. Milsom, that the life of the common law has been in the "abuse of its fundamental ideas." Yet, to Watson, what is opportunism in civil law is transmuted into legal fiction in common law. And, while opportunism is good, in his view, fiction is bad. Single-handedly, according to Watson, the jurisdictional fiction permitted the common law to ossify, hindered the development of entire areas of the law by creating artificial categories, ensured that the common law "could scarcely be regarded as a fit subject for intellectual analysis and rational explanation," and, worst of all, "blocked the Reception of Roman law." All roads lead to Rome, or, in Watson's view, at least they ought to.

True, a legal fiction can permit bad law to overstay its welcome. For example, English lawyers invoked the jurisdiction of the court of King's Bench (once it had ceased to travel and had settled in Middlesex) by falsely alleging that the facts of every case included a trespass in Middlesex. Because of this fiction, English courts managed to function without reexamining their views of jurisdiction. This obviously impeded legal efficiency. Yet what is the connection between legal fiction and legal opportunism? More to the point, what is the difference between the two? Why is one

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progressive and the other regressive? Are they two sides of the same coin or very different phenomena? There is a story to be told here and a very interesting one. One only hopes that Professor Watson will turn his formidable talents to it sometime in the future.

No-Fault Philosophy

WHOSE JUSTICE? WHICH RATIONALITY? *By Alasdair MacIntyre. University of Notre Dame Press. $22.95.*

Reviewed by D. C. BAND

In 1980 the Danish Tourist Board, obviously unfamiliar with the works of Shakespeare, put out an advertisement asking, "Did You Ever Hear of Anyone Who Didn't Have a Great Time in Denmark?" I put down Alasdair MacIntyre's latest work thinking that an alternative rhetorical title for it might have been, "Did You Ever Hear of a Post-Augustinian Having a Great Time?" He holds that, over the past several centuries, Western man has been moving toward our present condition, in which we try to identify social and moral yardsticks unrelated to temporally circumstantial, particular ethical perspectives, and in which we achieve only calamity. We are all in the moral dock, charged with abandoning Tradition; and Special Prosecutor MacIntyre asks each of us, "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and not in some sneaky relativistic way?" I have the impression that, if MacIntyre is correct, we would not recognize a decent tradition if one leapt up and bit us in the gluteus maximus. Now, put down that copy of *La Nouvelle Heloise* and answer the following question: What, above all, has led us into this sorry state of affairs? Yes, you guessed it: it's the Enlightenment. As readers of his earlier book, *After Virtue* (1981), will know, Professor MacIntyre is a terrier, and the Enlightenment is his bone. In his new work, he asks:

✪ D. C. Band is a management consultant and writer living in Australia.

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> Of what did the Enlightenment deprive us? What the Enlightenment for the most part made us blind to and what we now need to recover is . . . a conception of rational enquiry as embodied in a tradition; a conception according to which the standards of rational justification themselves emerge from and are part of a history in which they are vindicated by the way in which they transcend the limitations of and provide remedies for the defects of their predecessors within the history of that same tradition.

The trouble with passages such as this, however—and there is no shortage of them in this book—is that they tell us who the guilty party is, but not what the crime is. All right, so we are all—thanks to the Enlightenment—gradually declining into an exhausted barbarism, but it turns out that Professor MacIntyre has a very particular kind of "tradition" in mind to rescue us. It appears that, if a species of social or ethical theory alleges that we *all* can find a justification for accepting it, then it doesn't signify as a tradition. This is because such justifications exist for individual associations alone—there is no such thing as a generic justification. The sound you hear is the heavy breathing of special-interest groups.

The book really should carry a health warning: "Contains Cut Corners That May Be Hazardous If Swallowed." Like the architect who had the recurring nightmare that Prince Charles liked one of his buildings, Professor MacIntyre deep down really does not want us to enlist in a tradition: "Progress in rationality is achieved only from a point of view." So contemporary political liberalism—he really means "social democracy," although he does not realize it—is not a *tradition* properly understood: it is merely post-industrial Western society's approved communal ethic. It is merely, as Chapman Pincher once wrote of the Foreign Office, "a hot-bed of cold feet." Indeed, post-Augustinian moral philosophy is not a tradition, notwithstanding its longevity and the number of its practitioners. But, if it is not clear why this is so, at least figuring out what *does* count as a tradition is as easy as guessing who is buried in Grant's Tomb. The ethical systems of the middle ages and antiquity do derive from traditions. Therefore there is *some* possibility that they may be valid. As for us poor souls: "Within that kind of academic philosophy which is the heir to the philosophies of the Enlightenment, enquiry into the nature of rational justification has continued with ever-increasing refinement and undiminishing agreement."

So, presumably the moral of the story is that, instead of seeking concord and achieving continual discord, we should seek certain assent among the personnel of smaller associations, more likely to have a shared purpose. The trouble is that, unless one is the sort of person whose children have names like Mothership, and who competes with Simone de Beauvoir for lack of humor, this kind of self-regarding, earnest tribalism gets nobody anywhere, as I had assumed the 1970s (not to mention the 1930s and the 1790s) had demonstrated. It achieves nothing more than, in Huxley's words, "A great desert of nonentity, endlessly not there, and empty, quite lifeless." Its practitioners either have more intellect than money, or more money than intellect, but I can never remember which. In short, Professor MacIntyre's recommendation displays a contempt for historical nicety. Difficult as it may be to contemplate, without reaching for a drink, the fact is that we are obliged to share the planet with the kinds of zealots whom his prescriptions would favor. But let us nevertheless try bravely to press on, recalling Franco Venturi's words in a review that the book in question "deserves the fashionable term 'stimulating' in the sense that, once having read it, one gets a desire to rewrite it."

How can anyone not given either to nostalgic Marxist voyeurism or to the kind of Christianity that avers much but believes little be sure that a single, temporally circumstantial trail, owing nothing to the external environment, will guide him to Veracity? This is not to argue that we should join the pompous little pseuds who now people our universities and have turned them into swamps of moral relativism (and some of their students are just as bad). Ten years ago, they were quite newsworthy, but nobody followed up on them. It *is* an argument for cultivating the ability to analyze objectively *all* "traditions," not least those to which we each owe the greatest debt. Professor MacIntyre would have us engage in some kind of moral scorched-earth program and, on the razed steppes of our consciences, plant and fertilize some ethical precepts that somehow "would be found undeniable by all rational persons." They would no doubt be

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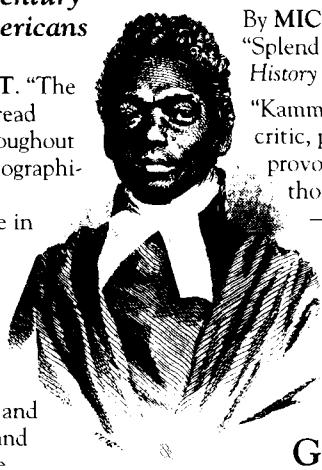

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C O R N E L L

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about as catchy as an Iranian dirge. Have we really not yet learned that no such precepts are to be found?

Beyond the cramped little orthodoxies of the various fashionable party lines can be found only critical inquiries. But they are not critical inquiries that have been constructed for their own sake or so that their authors can admire their own cleverness. They genuinely seek responses, information, knowledge—even if it is hard to understand or to believe, because (and this is part of the project) it will generate inquiries of itself, and so on. Through discovering objectively on which points we can concur and on which we must apply further the analytical microscope, it is just possible that, bit by bit, we may build a perspective that meets Professor MacIntyre's requirements. But it is a slow process and very much a long-term one. It is impossible to say how far advanced we are upon it. It is certain, however, that the most important element of that process has always been, and will continue to be, harsh and disappointing experience. This is not to deny the dangers that Professor MacIntyre perceives. The rootlessness of so much of contemporary life is deeply disturbing, but the rediscovery of roots must be exactly that—a business of (often painful) discovery, not a product of either blind hope or imposition from above.

There *is* an enormous problem, but Professor MacIntyre is, I fear, a disturbingly long way from its solution. His prescriptions are reminiscent of the first aid administered to the Duke of Wellington on his deathbed: purgatives of mustard, calomel, tickling his throat with a feather, and applying mustard poultices to the feet and legs. The Duke had had a heart attack. With all the easy aplomb of a linebacker on Valium, Professor MacIntyre wobbles around the more immediate causes of the problems he has identified. It is ineffably inconsequential to me whether or not the Enlightenment started our troubles, since worrying about (or being clever about) the Enlightenment at this late stage is a bit like throwing a shovelful of caviar at a dole queue. What he does not address is the fake togetherness of the contemporary costless and faultless culture. For a large slice of this, we have his peers in the academy to thank—they who have spent at least the past fifty years splashing their intellectual eau de cologne on, yes, *traditional* social relationships and obligations. And those traditional relationships and obligations were the direct outcome of, were grounded in, and were held together by, some moral rules that for a very long time were more effective with greater numbers of people than Professor MacIntyre apparently thinks is possible.

Watch where you step: the social engineers held a workshop here this morning. Just as Mussolini derived his idea of formal dress from the films of Laurel and Hardy, so our governing classes can easily drive past and miss the cemetery where truth is buried. It is called "Irresponsibility Lawns." It has grown on the idea that there is no such thing as personal duty or personal fault. If it has created a "tradition" to replace those it has destroyed, it is one whose elements are precisely that anomie, that unbelonging, identified by Professor MacIntyre. Only when we acknowledge the evil we have done in the name of compassion will we take the first step toward the kind of society that (I think) he wants to see. The tenacity with which we let things go is now so well-developed that we cannot be optimistic.

Ethical Culture

THE COMPANY WE KEEP: AN ETHICS OF FICTION. *By* WAYNE BOOTH. *University of California Press.* $29.95.

Reviewed by BRUCE BAWER

When I attended graduate school in the early eighties, the feminist-Marxist-deconstructionist incursion was already pretty well along, and I found myself gravitating to professors of a less trendy intellectual bent. The most interesting of them, as a group, were the Chicago critics. The good ones took my breath away: they could lay bare the intricate—and exquisitely coherent—plot structure of a sprawling Renaissance play faster than you could say *Bussy d'Ambois*; they could take a short Emily Dickinson poem and unpack pat-

BRUCE BAWER is the author of a collection of essays entitled *Diminishing Fictions*, published by Graywolf Press.

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terns of meaning for three straight hours, and make the whole business as engaging as a top-notch detective story.

But then there were the other Chicago critics: the ones who lectured in a precise, dispassionate, almost dehumanized monotone, retelling for days on end the story of some mammoth eighteenth-century novel, every so often saying, "We're getting a lot of work done here," but never actually getting anywhere. Their common failing was a sort of cosmic humorlessness, an almost hilarious literal-mindedness; their common fate, it appeared, was to get bogged down for decades in grandly conceived projects that sounded as boring as they did ambitious. I came to realize that Chicago-style criticism, with its emphasis on system, scholarship, and evidence, was perfectly suited to both the most brilliantly analytical and the most ploddingly unimaginative of academic critics: its neo-Aristotelian ideas and methods could turn a smart student into a first-rate literary anatomist, and a dull-witted student into a tedious, uninspired critic-accountant.

Which brings us to Wayne Booth. A protégé of founding Chicago critic R. S. Crane, Booth—now a Distinguished Professor at his alma mater, the University of Chicago—continues, in *The Company We Keep*, to evince many of the preoccupations and prejudices of his first book, the celebrated *Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961): namely, a relentless fixation on grand (and sometimes nebulous) abstractions; a predisposition to relate literature to real-life values; and (unlike the New Critics) a tendency to talk more about fiction than about poetry. Booth continues to write a stolid academic prose that is more serviceable than it is scintillating; he continues, too, to make excessive use of his overworked concept, the "implied author," and of his fallacious conceit of the author as the reader's friend. For all the Big Questions he asks, however, most of them—to borrow a comment made by Thomas Benson in a review of *Now Don't Try to Reason with Me* (1970)—continue to be left unanswered as Booth "gyrates in a continual process of discovery, development, and restatement." Booth himself admits, in the latter book, that his criticism suffers from an excess of caution; and indeed he's obviously far more comfortable meandering unhurriedly through familiar conceptual territory—all the while making commonsensical observations, reiterating endlessly, piling up mountains of "evidence" for even the most self-evident (or unprovable) of arguments, qualifying to death even the most modest of propositions, and avoiding definitive conclusions—than he is grappling with new and compelling ideas. For a critic who addresses Big Questions, he says precious little that is fresh, perceptive, or startling; he seems to have aimed no higher than meticulousness and modesty.

In many ways, Booth's massive new book reads like a sequel to its equally capacious immediate predecessor, *Critical Understanding* (1979). In the earlier book, Booth speaks up (in good Chicago-critic fashion) for critical pluralism. "Let the voices multiply," he proclaims; "the more voices we have, the more truth will finally emerge." He proceeds (at great length) to show how it is possible for a single critic to profit from the insights of such diverse authorities as Crane and Kenneth Burke; at the same time (and also at great length) he argues that such a pluralism should not "embrace all meanings as equally valid and so, finally, meaningless." But which meanings should be embraced, which rejected? In *The Company We Keep* he answers this question (if he can truly be said to answer *any* question) more or less as follows: embrace those who write ethical criticism, reject those who don't.

What, you may ask, is an "ethical critic"? In Booth's book, it's pretty much anyone who acknowledges that literature has some connection to life and its values; and he defines *ethics* as broadly as possible, subsuming beneath it the concept of *ethos*. Yet he argues at the same time that even the most seemingly objective critical description (a) is covertly evaluative and (b) implies an ethical judgment (in the conventional sense of the word *ethical*). To say, for instance, "I read a book by a poet yesterday" is to imply, by the use of the word *poet* and not some such phrase as "would-be poet," that the person in question has a certain degree of skill—and to say that someone is skilled, in turn, is implicitly to cite him (and here's where ethics come in) as someone who cares more about his art than does a less accomplished colleague. But this is absurd: to call someone a poet is not to imply that he is a good poet; it is simply to indicate that he writes poems as opposed to,

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say, novels or essays. Nor is the author of a bad poem necessarily ethically delinquent: he may just lack taste or talent.

As in Robert Alter's recent *The Pleasures of Reading*, Booth's principal target is the deconstructionist conceit that a literary text refers only to itself and other texts, and that criticism is too subjective to be regarded as a road to truth. Booth submits that texts do refer to things beyond themselves, and that we should concern ourselves with the ethical implications of such references. Good for him; serious literary critics have always felt this way. Yet Booth fixes his attention upon the crudest, most academically modish kinds of "ethical" charges: that (for instance) *Huckleberry Finn* is racist, *The Merchant of Venice* anti-Semitic, and *Cosi fan tutti* sexist; he recalls how, a quarter century ago, a young black colleague named Paul Moses (to whose memory *The Company We Keep* is dedicated) decided not to teach *Huckleberry Finn* because of its "distorted views of race." Booth says that he used to consider such objections invalid because these works are classics with complex moral dimensions. But no more. *"The Company We Keep,"* he writes, "can perhaps best be described as an effort to discover why that still widespread response to Paul Moses's sort of complaint will not do"—and, one might add, to explain why Moses's race-oriented reading of *Huckleberry Finn* represents (in Booth's view) a perfectly valid example of one kind of ethical criticism. In the course of this "explanation"—and, for that matter, throughout the book—Booth all but ignores the gulf separating the aesthetic concerns of some critics and the sociopolitical slant of others, insisting that all ethical critics are partners of a sort and can learn from each other.

And as partners, they should be friendly. Booth, for his part, is extremely friendly, finding ample space to lavish compliments on the (at best) marginally relevant books of a wide range of colleagues: M. H. Abrams's "great" *Natural Supernaturalism*, Peter Novick's "monumental" *That Noble Dream*, W. J. T. Mitchell's "splendid" *Iconography*, and dozens of others. Even the deconstructionists come in for praise. ("From many a deconstructionist we can receive the valuable warning not to think that we have a literal picture when what we're really dealing with is metaphor.") These gratuitous expressions of praise are balanced by equally gratuitous cheap shots—at Ronald Reagan, for instance, and at ruthless "Melvin Belli types"—that Booth undoubtedly realizes will please most of his fellow academics. (Predictably, Booth says nothing about ruthless *academic* types: even the most insipid careerist is treated respectfully here.)

The only time when Booth is not friendly to colleagues is when he is attacking dead, no-longer-popular critics for not being as friendly as he is. He blames the spread of deconstruction, for instance, largely on ethical critics who "have inadvertently discredited the whole enterprise" of ethical criticism by their "slapdash arguments and hectoring tones" and by a failure to practice "exemplary rigor and sensitivity." Chief among these insensitive types are Yvor Winters and F. R. Leavis, both of whom Booth faults for considering some literary virtues preeminent over others, and for taking an unpleasant tone, in which (Booth gripes) many readers heard "a threat of censorship." An odd complaint, given that it's Marxist and feminist ideologues, not humanists like Winters and Leavis, who are inclined to call for censorship.

Yet to Booth, it must be remembered, ideology is not a dirty word: in his view, we're all ideologues of one kind or another. (A previous draft of *The Company We Keep*, he tells us, was entitled "Ideology and Form.") It's a view that, I think, fatuously blurs the vital distinction between groupthink and individuality, between a ready-made philosophy that is bought into wholesale and one that is shaped by learning and experience and takes form gradually. The best literary critics, it cannot be too strongly emphasized, are not ideologues at all. Booth, himself the very model of a modern academic disciple, is blind to this fact. Nor does he seem disturbed that most Ph.D. candidates in English today shop for critical methodologies the way teenagers shop for clothes, picking something fashionable off the rack without thinking much about what literature means to them and why they're in academia in the first place.

Given his groupthink mentality, it should not be surprising that Booth's reply to the deconstructionist tenet of critical subjectivity is that of a classic faculty-meeting type: ultimate critical truths, he proposes, are determined not by independent critics but by "co-

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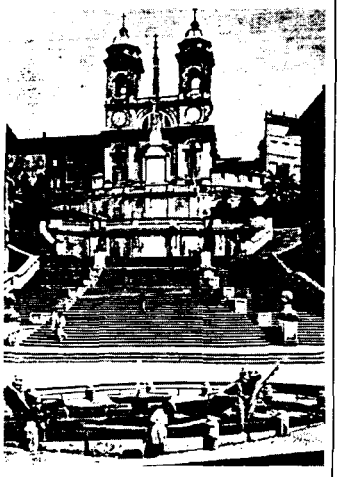

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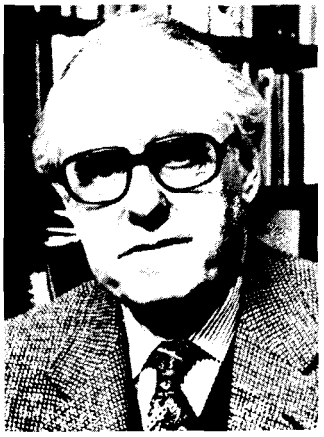

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ductions"—a word that he has coined to mean

> what we do whenever we say to the world (or prepare ourselves to say): "Of the works of this general kind that I have experienced, *comparing my experience with other more or less qualified observers*, this one seems to me among the better (or weaker) ones, or the best (or worst). Here are my reasons." Every such statement implicitly calls for continuing conversation: "How does my coduction compare with yours?" . . . The validity of our coductions must always be corrected in conversations about the coductions of others whom we "trust."

In other words, critical truth is arrived at communally, and in the long term: no single critic can be trusted to recognize the whole and precise truth about a given work of literature, but many skilled critics, amplifying, contradicting, and refining each other's perceptions over a period of time, do tend to interpret and judge works of literature accurately. Thus the only way to produce useful and reliable literary criticism is to encourage "coductions" within the community of ethical critics.

This is the closest thing to a thesis that Booth's book has. Generally speaking, of course, he's right: in practice, we're all pluralists of a kind, learning from some critics, dismissing others. But this is hardly news. Certainly, one imagines, Booth must be saying something *more* than this. But what? Is he suggesting that the process should somehow be formalized—that there should be some official list of "in" critics and "out" critics? If so, who makes up the list? How? What makes a critic "qualified"? A Ph.D.? A professorship? Or simply an "ethical" approach to criticism, no matter how foolishly conceived or applied? And what would happen to the "outs"? Would they be prohibited from publishing, from teaching? Surely Booth doesn't intend any of this; probably he's not really proposing anything that is not already the case. Perhaps all he's doing, in fact, is defending the idea of criticism as a communal endeavor—as, if you will, a profession (in the dreariest sense of the word)—and of reading as something that should always be followed by a discussion. "To me," he writes, "the most important of all critical tasks is to participate in—and thus to reinforce—a critical culture, a vigorous conversation, that will nourish in return those who feed us with their narratives."

Yes, critical culture *is* important. But Booth appears to rely altogether too much on those "vigorous conversations." At times, indeed, he doesn't quite seem to understand how an independent critical response is properly arrived at. He describes how, emerging from a theater in tears after seeing *The Color Purple*, he was told by his wife that the movie was corny: in the reconsideration that followed, he says, a "revaluation" of his critical reaction took place. But sentimental tears do not constitute a critical reaction; such a reaction is the product of *thought* that takes place after the aesthetic experience—thought that takes the tears into account and understands them. Alternatively, Booth sometimes appears to think that a legitimate critical reaction can be formed *without* an aesthetic experience: he distinguishes reading "for the sake of reading" from reading "for the sake of obtaining material for an essay, dissertation, or book," and implies that it is perfectly acceptable for the reader, in the latter instance, to be detached, emotionally uninvolved.

Booth's emphasis on community, furthermore, helps to explain his tireless use of the conceit of the author as the reader's friend. "Whenever a narrative really works for us," he writes, "we are sure to feel, when challenged, that the author . . . is our kind of person, practicing 'virtues'—both skills and morals and intellectual powers—that we admire." But this isn't so at all: one often admires books by people one dislikes, and dislikes books by people one admires. Comparing a Norman Mailer book to one by Anne Tyler, Booth says that "on the scales of quantity, reciprocity, and range, Tyler will prove to be the better friend." But what do such scales—or any literary values, for that matter—have to do with the values of friendship?

Not surprisingly, the conclusions of *The Company We Keep*—if they can even be referred to as such—are tentative and politic in the extreme. Ultimately, the 557-page opus adds up to little more than a pallid plea for ethical pluralism: "We only live, only suspire, pursuing *both* common ground *and* respect for difference." Well, one can hardly argue with so noble and empty a sentiment. But man does not suspire by ethical pluralism alone; and Booth's opacity on this score is perhaps best illustrated by his inane rewrite of an Ajax jingle to make it pro-Shakespeare—his point

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being to "underline the difficulties in our project" of devising "an effective ethical criticism." What difficulties? Well, Booth knows he's not supposed to like the jingle, whether it's about Ajax or Shakespeare, but he hasn't the foggiest idea how to demonstrate this fact ethically—so he merely presents us with the two versions of the jingle and (in effect) shrugs. One can see immediately, of course, where his difficulties lie. For what his exercise splendidly demonstrates (and what he apparently misses entirely) is that the jingle's mediocrity is not an ethical but an aesthetic question—a kind of question, supremely important in the enterprise of literary criticism, for which Booth's critical approach simply doesn't leave enough room.

His Better Half

NORA: THE REAL LIFE OF MOLLY BLOOM. *By* *BRENDA MADDOX. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $24.95.*

Reviewed by ROSEMARIE A. BATTAGLIA

The question often comes up in Joycean circles: Why did the gifted genius James Joyce marry Nora Barnacle, a chambermaid? Brenda Maddox's biography of Nora is the first ever devoted to Joyce's wife. It is a revisionary biography, one that remedies the gaps and failures caused by decades of critical neglect and a misunderstanding of Nora. A companion volume to Richard Ellmann's famous biography, *James Joyce*, this biography is an important compendium of sources about the Joyces' life in Ireland and on the Continent. Maddox cites a great deal of heretofore unpublished material in the biography's abundant documentation. The book is a justification of Nora in her own right, not simply as the supporting wife of Joyce or as the model for his main female characters. The unpublished material shows how Nora became the single most dominating female influence in Joyce's works. Maddox uses many illustrative anecdotes that show how Joyce was, in effect, virtually unable to live without her. After reading this biography, it is my belief that Joyce was not only unable to live without Nora, but he would have been unable to write his major works without her.

The story of Nora's life is a testament to her courage, strength, and endurance, qualities that enabled her to remain as Joyce's wife through all the vicissitudes of their life together, including the initial disapproval of their relationship by family; exile to a continent Nora had never seen before and whose languages and customs she was totally unfamiliar with; poverty, evictions, Joyce's drinking problem, his eye problems, and their multiple changes in residence; the madness of his daughter Lucia, the failures of his son Giorgio, and the mental illness of Giorgio's wife; two world wars; and last but not least, the great initial resistance Joyce's publications met with in Europe and in America and the consequent frustrations engendered by this resistance.

Maddox's meticulous research and documentation have turned this biography into a valuable source book for decades to come. As a writer, Maddox shows great ease and talent in handling the abundant material with which she deals. She relates details from the Joyces' life to the fictionalized representation of it. For example, in *Dubliners* Joyce used materials from Nora's early life by making Nora's father the prototype for the father in his story "Eveline." Cissy Caffrey, in the "Nausikaa" episode in *Ulysses*, is traced to a schoolmate of Nora, Cissy Casey, whose father was a porter. Details for the story "The Dead" were taken from Nora's early life as well, and the character "Mulvey" in Molly's monologue in *Ulysses* is an adaptation of Nora's boyfriend Willie Mulvagh. In addition to serving as the model for Molly in *Ulysses* and for Anna Livia in *Finnegans Wake*, Nora became the model for Bertha in Joyce's play *Exiles*.

One highly interesting section of Maddox's biography details the similarities between the familial and social backgrounds of Joyce and Nora. These similarities, I believe, help explain their initial attraction to each other. Both had drunken fathers who were poor supporters of their families, and both had families that were forced to move to cheaper quarters. Both knew the "brutality of a loveless home"; both

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lived close to members of religious orders; and both joined holy sodalities, loved holidays, and were thrust early from the nest. In Nora, Joyce found a rescuer, a woman whose strength he found admirable; and he found similar strength helpful in other women he met in the course of his writing career—such women as Harriet Weaver, Sylvia Beach, and Adrienne Monnier. Nora seemed to have come at the right moment to rescue Joyce from what was then his sexual dereliction. She was free from the sexual guilt that was so characteristic of the Irish of that day and has been suggested as a cause of the high rate of schizophrenia in Ireland. She had, in Maddox's words, the "freedom to be passionate" that characterized Irish women, and Joyce found this highly attractive. The sexual attractiveness of Nora was undeniable; her sexual boldness on her first meeting with Joyce surprised him and helped him fall in love with her. Joyce was certainly not uninitiated sexually when he met Nora; he had frequented prostitutes since the age of fourteen. Nevertheless, in Nora, Joyce seemed to have found a woman who represented all the passionate and untamed Irishness that Synge, for example, so greatly admired in the Aran Islands.

According to Maddox, Nora was the perfect complement to Joyce. Her energetic emotional quality suited Joyce's needs perfectly and provided a match for his intellectual imagination. Joyce's imagination never ceased to use the materials of Irish Catholic Dublin for a ruthless self-interrogation and criticism, and his use of Nora as the model for Molly in *Ulysses* and for Anna Livia in *Finnegans Wake* provides the final "answer" to the vicissitudes wrestled with in both books. Although Nora was the inspiration for the female characters in these books, she can hardly be blamed for not reading *Ulysses*; not many educated editors, publishers, and readers appreciated Joyce's works when they first appeared, and there are not all that many readers of *Ulysses* even today.

Nora did realize, however, that what Joyce was writing was important, a fact attested to by her rescue of the manuscript of *Stephen Hero* when Joyce threw it into the fire in a fit of rage. "The book will make him famous," she remarked, and Joyce was indeed subsequently grateful that it had been saved. At the celebration of the publication of *Finnegans Wake* on February 2, 1939, Nora recognized that Joyce had ended the book with the very words with which he had asked her to come away with him in 1904: "Is there one who understands me?" Maddox writes that it is no wonder that Nora would say in future years, "What's all this about *Ulysses*? *Finnegans Wake*. That's the important book."

Maddox goes into great detail about the exchange of letters between the two when Joyce left Nora to visit Ireland. Their correspondence anticipates the depraved sexuality found in the "Circe" episode of *Ulysses*, but it should be noted that, according to Maddox, the obscene communication between the Joyces relieved sexual frustration "by the least undesirable method" and was for Nora "an exercise in fluency and in control" wherein she could match Joyce on paper. The correspondence (as well as the encouragement by Joyce that Nora have sexual adventures and he his own sexual flirtations) suggests that there was a marriage game, much like chess, for two players, involving as pawns Cosgrave, Prezioso, Weiss, Amalia Popper, Marthe Fleischmann, and Dr. Gertrude Kaempfler. Maddox makes the suggestion that, when Joyce was turning his libidinal energies toward writing *Ulysses*, the active sexual life of the Joyces ceased. Joyce was thus diverting his erotic energies from life to fiction. It might be remembered, in this respect, that Bloom does not lead a normal married life with Molly in *Ulysses*, permitting her adultery with Blazes Boylan as he wanders through Dublin. The state of affairs with the Blooms suggests a corresponding reality in a failure of the sexual life of the Joyces. The evidence suggests that Joyce was never unfaithful to Nora, nor Nora to Joyce, with the possible exception of the Cosgrave affair, about which Nora remained cagey and noncommittal, and with the exception of Joyce's visits to prostitutes before meeting Nora and for a brief time in Trieste after their "marriage." Nora, Maddox writes, resented being used by Joyce in his effort to seek vicarious pleasure through his wife's supposed adultery, in the manner of Richard's seeking pleasure through his wife Bertha's adultery in *Exiles*. The erotic correspondence between Joyce and Nora, encouraged by Joyce, may well have functioned both as a stimulus to sexual desire during their separa-

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tion and as material that was subsequently transformed into the fiction. It may well be, too, that Nora participated in this process because she loved Joyce and wanted to please him, despite her dislike of being used in a game to stage adultery.

A highly attractive section of Maddox's book makes the likenesses between Nora and Molly Bloom most obvious. Molly's unpunctuated flow of language mimics Nora's writing style, as excerpts from Nora's letters illustrate. Maddox points out that certain of Molly's lines in *Ulysses* seem to be pure Nora. Some of Molly's and Nora's letters have the same espousal day, October 8; both women are the same age, early thirties, and both had lopped two years off their ages and had a sexual experience at age fifteen. Both Molly and Nora were jealous of their adolescent daughters, and their names have the same vowel and stress patterns; both use nicknames for their husbands, and both use a hectoring tone of voice against their henpecked husbands. Molly, like Nora, had an admirer (Mulvey was Molly's, Mulvagh was Nora's). Both had made stage appearances, liked roast chicken, read pornography, and believed in God. Both had curious marriages in which their husbands were interested in sharing them with other men, and both had husbands who were unsure about how many lovers their wives had had. Both had lost a baby and feared having another, and both made unashamed use of the chamber pot. Neither woman understood what had happened to the sexual drive of their husbands, and both became coquettes after being raised by their fathers.

Maddox has made a great effort to illuminate the development of Joyce's daughter Lucia's mental illness, rendering details that show its inception in childhood and moving in stages toward her final confinement. That Joyce was unrealistic in understanding and handling Lucia's illness is evident in his interruptions of Lucia's treatment and in his resistance to psychoanalysis in general. Nevertheless, Maddox shows that Lucia's mental illness caused great sorrow and despair to Joyce and Nora, despite their well-meaning efforts in her behalf. Joyce and Nora also experienced disappointment over Giorgio's failure to make a singing career for himself, and the disappointments over Lucia and Giorgio are all the more poignant because, despite Joyce's seeming irresponsibility, he loved his children very much.

Although posterity dismissed her as a "slovenly illiterate who could not even cook," the evidence of literary friends suggests that Joyce could not have survived without Nora. That Nora was the center of Joyce's life is supported by Stephen's (Joyce's grandson's) statement that Joyce could have "written not one of the books without her." Nora's best-known fault was her refusal to read *Ulysses,* but what is less known, unfortunately, is that she provided Joyce with the great inspiration and support he needed to become the writer who would change the course of modern literature. Scholarly interest has only recently begun to focus on Nora, and she is seen in Maddox's book as a female who escaped Irish-Catholic repression and the idealization of the "pure Irish woman" typified by Irish Catholicism. Nora is seen as the Irish woman Joyce thought she should be, a woman who was able to combine Irishness with feminine libidinal desires, which are usually kept apart in Irish society even to the present. Maddox ends her biography with the statement, "Far more lightly than her conscience-tormented lover, she slipped the social bonds placed to hold her back." The immortalizing of Nora in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* is a a tribute to that escape.

The Style of Stylistics

LEO SPITZER: REPRESENTATIVE ESSAYS. *Edited by Alban K. Forcione, Herbert Lindenberger, and Madeline Sutherland. Stanford University Press. $39.50.*

Reviewed by CARL LANDAUER

Leo Spitzer is often mentioned in the same breath as Erich Auerbach, Ernst Robert Curtius, and Karl Vossler. Together they are deemed the four great twentieth-century German scholars of Romance literature. Like the others—especially Erich Auerbach, author of

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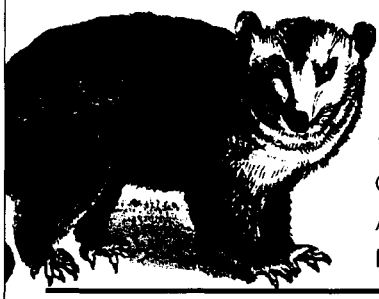
the wide-ranging *Mimesis*—Spitzer is revered for the encyclopedic scope of his criticism and his command of the vast chronology of Western literature, which was supplemented by a seemingly unlimited knowledge of history and philosophy. Thus, when Spitzer offered his close readings of literary texts to American audiences in the 1940s and 1950s from his new position at Johns Hopkins University, his efforts were immediately compared to those of the reigning school of American close readers, the New Critics, who since the thirties had been preaching a criticism that started and ended with the text. Spitzer's "stylistics" offered an alternative that blended close reading with cultural historical analyses drawn from the German practices of *Geistesgeschichte*. If Spitzer complained that he had little following in the American academy, that was largely because American critics felt they could not match his European erudition and his German philological training: one could read Spitzer attentively but not re-create his personal style.

Spitzer was very clear and usually forceful on the contours of his own methodological procedure. It is therefore fully appropriate that the present volume begins its "representative essays" with a manifesto for his methodology, the title essay for his book *Linguistics and Literary History* of 1948. In the essay, Spitzer lays out his method, which begins with a reading for the unusual philological detail—a strange sentence construction or an odd word usage. For example, he "noticed in the novel *Bubu de Montparnasse* of Charles-Louis Philippe (1905), which moves in the underworld of Parisian pimps and prostitutes, a particular use of *à cause de*." From there Spitzer argued that the "expansions of causal usages in Philippe cannot be due to chance: There must be 'something the matter' with his conception of causality." Spitzer was confident that these observations ultimately "lead toward a psychological etymon, which is at the bottom of the linguistic as well as the literary inspiration of Philippe." Here the central faith of Spitzer's method is intoned: that linguistic details provide traces of the central force of poetic invention. Indeed, the details offered by Spitzer inevitably lead the critic to the center of a literary work.



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They are not the only path to the center: "Language is only one outward crystallization of the 'inward form' . . . the lifeblood of poetic creation is everywhere the same, whether we tap the organism at 'language' or 'ideas,' at 'plot' or at 'composition.' " This organic conception of literature is rather distant from the contemporary critic's insistence on the tension between layers in a literary work, between surface meanings and the rhetorical usages. Indeed, Spitzer may have voiced turn-of-the-century German conceptions of culture as organic and seamless, but his easy transit from linguistic detail to individual psychology to culture remains inspiring.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to Spitzer's organic conception of literature is posed by his own writing, by the tremendous stylistic diversity of his several hundred articles. Introducing two of Spitzer's essays on the seventeenth-century Spanish poet Luis de Góngora, the editors of *Leo Spitzer: Representative Essays* suggest that two important analogies used in one of the essays "are consistent with the mannered style of the entire essay and with the particular kind of stylistic violence that the critic would clarify in Góngora's strange poetic world." The editors continue: "As Erich Auerbach has pointed out, not without some misgivings, Spitzer occasionally writes as if he would outdo the work of art through the appropriation of its very style." Spitzer's first essay on the baroque poet Góngora, originally published in 1930, is indeed baroque in its style and in its sensibility. In it Spitzer writes that "poetry is not simply repose: writing poetry also means losing one's way." And Spitzer's own prose is beset with the labyrinthine confusion of the Spanish baroque, just as it is given over to the baroque's fullness and color. His voice in the essay is simply different from his voice in other essays. Indeed, over his hundreds of articles, written and published in five languages, Spitzer assumed a number of voices, adopted a variety of styles, and made dramatic transformations in sensibility.

There are, of course, certain constants in the bulk of his work, especially during his decades in the United States. His overwhelming preference for the article remained with him throughout his career. His tendency for sharp polemical combat was a trait that he himself had to acknowledge—at times, his polemical tone became shrill, allowing him to write: "I think that once again the critic is wrong, absolutely wrong." Throughout Spitzer's work there is a strong authorial presence and a confidence in technical mastery. There is also a recurrent reference to his methodology, so that many of Spitzer's essays are framed as methodological samples. But despite the claims to a single clearly defined method, Spitzer's essays are quite diverse, as evidenced even by the thirteen essays chosen for his *Representative Essays.* In "Development of a Method," the last essay in this new collection, Spitzer recognizes a periodization in his interests and his critical procedure, but the diversity of his work cannot be explained entirely by recourse to periodization. Ultimately, Spitzer was an unusually complicated individual, an individual whose many layerings may not have been as closely bound together as he considered the layerings in literary works.

Spitzer left important hints about his own complexity. His chosen literary vehicle, the article, suggests that each of his writings was a fragment of a larger whole. And as the editors of his *Representative Essays* suggest in their preface, much of the work of Spitzer's essays was done in his footnotes. For that reason, the editors made the unusual decision to integrate Spitzer's footnotes with his text, differentiating them from the main text by a smaller typeface. This design has the benefit of emphasizing the importance of Spitzer's footnotes. But, in addition to losing the flow of the main text, one has less of a sense that there are two texts going on at once. Instead, there is one line of text that makes awkward returns from its small-typeface digressions. This is an odd experiment with a critic whose sense of detail extended to orthography.

In their selection of texts, the editors of this collection have, however, given us important leads to interpreting Spitzer's complexity. Not only have they provided a range in subject matter that extends from Spitzer's analysis of an advertisement for Sunkist oranges to the obligatory Dante studies of a mid-century Romance philologist, they have also given some emphasis to Spitzer's study of the baroque, particularly by providing a translation of an essay on the Spanish baroque originally

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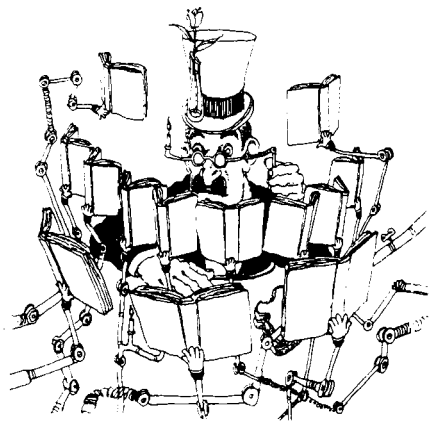
published in Spanish. In part, this essay reveals a religiosity seen in few of Spitzer's other texts. In his famous etymological study of the German word *Stimmung*—unfortunately not represented in the *Representative Essays*—Spitzer discloses a personal religiosity, if that religiosity is ultimately of the neo-Platonic form that so often substitutes as religion for German scholars, particularly Jewish scholars like Spitzer.

But in "The Spanish Baroque," Spitzer shows a profound attraction to the sensual spirituality of Mediterranean Catholicism:

> And when . . . I witnessed in 1928 the almost pagan processions of Holy Week in Seville, when the cathedral spills out into the street, when the religious confraternities carry through the streets superhuman Virgins dressed in brocade and laden with jewels, Magdalenes with genuine hair, Christs who show in their flesh the abjectness of suffering, I was shaken to the depths of my soul by something like a horror at once half mystical and half carnal; here, just two steps away, I saw the image of the spirit's descent into flesh.

This sensual spirituality is maintained as the central theme of Spitzer's essay on the Spanish baroque, and he invokes it with such power that we must recognize it as not only central to Spitzer's fascination with the baroque, but also as an important presence in Spitzer's psyche. The man who could assume an unbridled pedantry possessed also a strong sensual spirituality and a baroque taste for the uneasy balance of extremes. This Spitzer, rather different from the Spitzer of the memorial essays and the scholarly discussions of past years, emerges out of the pages of *Representative Essays* and adds complexity to our attempts to understand his work.

The various forces working on Spitzer's psyche and consequently on his criticism can only add to the richness of his texts for us. If, for polemical purposes, Spitzer often streamlined his methodological message, his criticism suggests unnumbered tangents and offshoots, and these tangents and offshoots are extremely important. The editors of this new collection of Leo Spitzer's essays have understood this. They have not only brought together some of Spitzer's most famous essays, such as "Linguistics and Literary History" and "American Advertising Explained as Pop-



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ular Art," they have also shown sides of Spitzer not well known to the American readers of literary criticism and have therefore greatly enhanced future readings of Spitzer's criticism.

Backwoods Manichaen

COLLECTED WORKS. *By Flannery O'Connor. Library of America. $30.*

Reviewed by HENRY MCDONALD

Most contemporary readers of Flannery O'Connor, the Southern fiction writer who died in 1964 at the age of thirty-nine, are well aware that she was a devout Catholic who viewed her work in the light of Christian theology. What they may not know is that many of O'Connor's early reviewers were not only unaware of her religiosity but were so affronted by the seemingly inexplicable violence and brutality of her tales that they characterized her as everything from morally perverse to a "backwoods nihilist." Nowadays, such characterizations are not taken seriously, since they are at odds with Flannery O'Connor's unambiguous declarations of her aims. Nonetheless, during the quarter of a century since her death, assessing the *kind* of religious vision reflected in her tales has proven to be no easy matter. Consider, for example, the story *Greenleaf*, in which a woman is gored to death by an amorous bull. Is it really plausible to see the bull as a Christ-figure who acts as an agent of redemption, as some critics have encouraged us to do? And, if so, what kind of Christianity is it that links Christ with bulls? Did not the biblical prophets struggle against such pagan idolatry long before the coming of Christ? The problem here is not whether O'Connor injected reassuring moral messages into her tales. Certainly she did not. Nor is the problem whether she repudiated sentimental notions of Christianity such as the "smiling Jesus with a bleeding heart," as she put it. Certainly she did. Rather, the problem is to what extent the vision of redemption represented in O'Connor's fiction remains within a recognizably religious framework. Was O'Connor a "saint," as a friend of hers, the poet Robert Lowell, once said, or is the prime motivating force in her fiction demonic and gnostic, as critics from John Hawkes to Harold Bloom have maintained?

With the publication of this splendid, relatively low-cost collection of Flannery O'Connor's work by the Library of America, the reader can now equip himself with a valuable tool to tackle such questions. Edited with scholarly notes on the texts by Sally Fitzgerald, the volume includes O'Connor's two novels, most of her stories (including a previously unpublished version of an early story, "An Afternoon in the Woods"), occasional prose, selections from her letters (including twenty previously unpublished letters), a chronology of O'Connor's life, and useful indexes. To my knowledge, it is the only major collection of O'Connor's works that contains both fiction and nonfiction. This fact is significant, for although O'Connor insisted, in good New Critical fashion, that her fiction be allowed to "speak for itself," she wrote with such penetration about her own work that her nonfiction has over the years become inseparably attached to the fiction on which it comments. This is not to say, of course, that O'Connor clears up the problems her fiction raises. On the contrary, the more critics have read what O'Connor had to say about her work, the more they have disagreed about the significance of such commentary. Broadly speaking, Flannery O'Connor critics can be divided into two opposing groups.

The first group maintains that O'Connor's inspiration is fundamentally Catholic and that her aim is persuasion—in the most general sense of the term—concerning Christian matters. Central to this view is the traditional Catholic (and Thomist) notion that grace, redemption, and the mystery of life and death can only be approached anagogically—that is, through a *via negativa* in which the sacred is not so much directly represented as indicated or shown by its absence in the profane. As O'Connor said, "Often the nature of grace can be made plain only by describing its absence." Or, as she wrote in the 1962 preface

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to her novel *Wise Blood*, "Does one's integrity ever lie in what he is not able to do? I think that usually it does." Only in a fallen, desacralized world, ruled by the Devil and inhabited by "grotesque" characters meeting violent fates, can the irruption of the numinous within this world be powerfully dramatized. It is the latter dramatization, however, that is the real point of the stories; the portrayal of man in his fallen, grotesque state is only a means or instrument to a larger, ultimately theological end.

Critics in the second group reverse this priority and place greater emphasis on the "means" than on the "end." One of the more extreme of such critics is Carol Schloss, who maintains that most of O'Connor's tales are devoid of religious content and that "in these times of moral relativity, at an historical moment when no communal values can guide the assignment of anagogical meanings," O'Connor would have done well to confine herself to declarative assertions of her religious faith. Other critics, less rigorously reductive in their logic, see religious "content" in O'Connor's work, but assign a very different value to it than what one would expect from O'Connor's profession of religious belief. According to such critics, O'Connor's vision of the order of reality was essentially gnostic or Manichean. Manicheanism, the dualistic philosophy that originated in the first few centuries of the Christian era, viewed matter as evil, spirit as good, and any contact between the two undesirable. Such Manicheanism, several critics maintain, can be seen in the deeply divided consciousnesses of the protagonists of O'Connor's two novels, as well as in her preoccupation in all her tales with the negative pole of the duality.

If O'Connor's subject is "the action of grace in territory held largely by the devil," as she put it, it is nonetheless true that she uses many more words describing the "territory" than the "action." Such observations have led critics like John Hawkes and John Burt to conclude that her vision of reality was not only Manichean but demonic—that she was a modern-day Milton who, in Blake's words, was "on the side of the Devil," even if she didn't know it. As Burt says of the hero of *Wise Blood*: "Haze has a purely negative power—like Milton's Satan—a power to resist, to overturn, to deny, and to perplex, a power which resembles the power of the author and which, like the author's power, expresses itself, and is called forth, by means of limitation and incomprehension."

I think that the best route to understanding Flannery O'Connor's fiction lies along a middle ground between these two opposing ways. Certainly some of O'Connor's theologically oriented critics have gone too far in assimilating her work to Christian dogma. Influenced by the principles and practice of New Criticism, O'Connor speaks repeatedly in her essays and letters of the necessity of the artist to "render," not to state, deploring the propensity of Catholic or any other kinds of authors to inject a "message" into their work. As she noted, "When the Catholic novelist closes his own eyes and tries to see with the eyes of the Church, the result is another addition to that large body of pious trash for which we have so long been famous."

For Flannery O'Connor, concrete experience was all important; the supernatural could be approached only *through* the natural. That is why she consistently advised other writers, not only Catholic ones, not to worry about what their fiction meant on an abstract level. "I don't believe in theorizing," she said. "In the end you do what you're able to and don't know what that has been." Essential to every good writer, O'Connor maintained, is "a certain grain of stupidity." It was precisely her ability to draw on such "stupidity" within herself—her ability to hold herself aloof from abstractions in the performance of her art—that allowed O'Connor to mine from her experience a level of meaning that cannot be reduced to Christian theology and that, on the contrary, seems to be continually on the verge of transforming such theology.

O'Connor's "Manichean" critics, however, do not define very clearly the nature of such transformation when they describe her work as "dualistic." In fact, there are two distinct and opposing *kinds* of dualism reflected in her fiction. The first kind of dualism, which O'Connor thought of as "modern Manichaenism," can be found in a character like Rayber of *The Violent Bear It Away*. It is a Cartesian dualism of mind and body in which the two poles are intrinsically different substances that may not be unified via a transcen-

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dental action of grace. Fulfillment here is to be found within, in an interiorized, private state of mind that disconnects thought from feeling (reducing the latter to mindless sentiment) and that becomes the vehicle of an amoral, ideological redemption. O'Connor went so far as to associate such dualism, in its most extreme form, with the Holocaust.

The second type of dualism can be found in characters like Hazel Motes of *Wise Blood* and the Misfit of *A Good Man Is Hard to Find.* Although murderers, the latter are ethically superior to characters like Rayber, for they retain the capacity both to feel and to make moral judgments. The dualism that afflicts them is a pre-Cartesian dualism not of body and mind, but of matter and spirit, in which the former term may be subsumed under the latter—in which "matter" is seen ultimately as a form, albeit lower, *of* spirit. Unlike Rayber, Hazel cannot reduce spirit to mental experience, cannot dissociate mind and emotion and believe in nothing; his rejection of God is a moral (or rather immoral) act. That is why the poles of Hazel's dualism are constantly in danger of collapsing upon themselves; his "integrity" consists precisely in his inability to prevent such a collapse, try as he might on a conscious level to keep the poles apart.

The issue here of consciousness is central. Many of Flannery O'Connor's characters, such as Mrs. May of *Greenleaf*, undergo a harrowing encounter with their own presumptions; redemption comes (when it comes at all) as a mysterious external force that disrupts or annihilates the self- and mind-centered worlds of the characters. "I can't see any way to write as a Catholic," she said, "unless you make what you write brutal." What makes O'Connor's tales "brutal" is that they portray characters who undergo a revelatory experience with only minimal consciousness of that experience. Such "brutality" was her way of hurling in the teeth of modernism one of its most cherished dogmas: the priority and importance of inner experience. But in so doing, O'Connor's purpose was not merely destructive; she wished to redress an imbalance effected by modern Manicheanism—to affirm the ultimate unity of the spiritual and the corporeal, the intelligible and sensible sides of ourselves.

Nonetheless, Flannery O'Connor's "Manichean" critics do have a point when they speak of "demonic" elements in her tales. O'Connor was acutely aware of the extent to which, *as* a Catholic, she lived and wrote in a void. "You probably have not imagined what it is to write as a Catholic," she says in a letter to a reader, "knowing that most of the people who read you will think what you believe is utter rubbish. . . . A Catholic can't write about a Catholic world because none exists." This sense of a void made O'Connor recognize in what ways the subject and content of her art were molded by twentieth-century presuppositions—"modern Manicheanism," as she thought of them—even as she was in the act of resisting such presuppositions. "You discover your audience at the same time and in the same way you discover your subject . . . at some point in my life I realized that not only was I a Catholic but that this was all I was, that I was a Catholic not like someone else would be a Baptist or a Methodist but like someone else would be an atheist."

O'Connor saw modern mores as destructive and nihilistic, but to combat such mores she had to draw on those very forces of destruction and nihilism. Here her position was similar to Nietzsche's, who spoke of his works as "a critique of modernity," and who saw his task as destructive and nihilistic on the one hand and affirmative and "yes-saying" on the other. For both O'Connor and Nietzsche, the crisis of modern civilization was a crisis of values; to reduce it to any other terms—economic, sociological, psychological, or even religious—was superficial and dangerous. When Nietzsche declared that God had died, for example, he was not referring, primarily, to the passing away of an irrelevant system of metaphysical beliefs—beliefs that could be discarded simply by secularizing and "individualizing" them. He was instead referring to the disintegration for modern man of a life-giving, communal, and historical system of values.

The same disintegration, or "sickness" as Nietzsche often called it, was the central subject of most of Flannery O'Connor's fiction. Her Christian view of modern man's sickness did not prevent her from recognizing its enormity or tempt her to propose abstract, dogmatic solutions to it. On the contrary,

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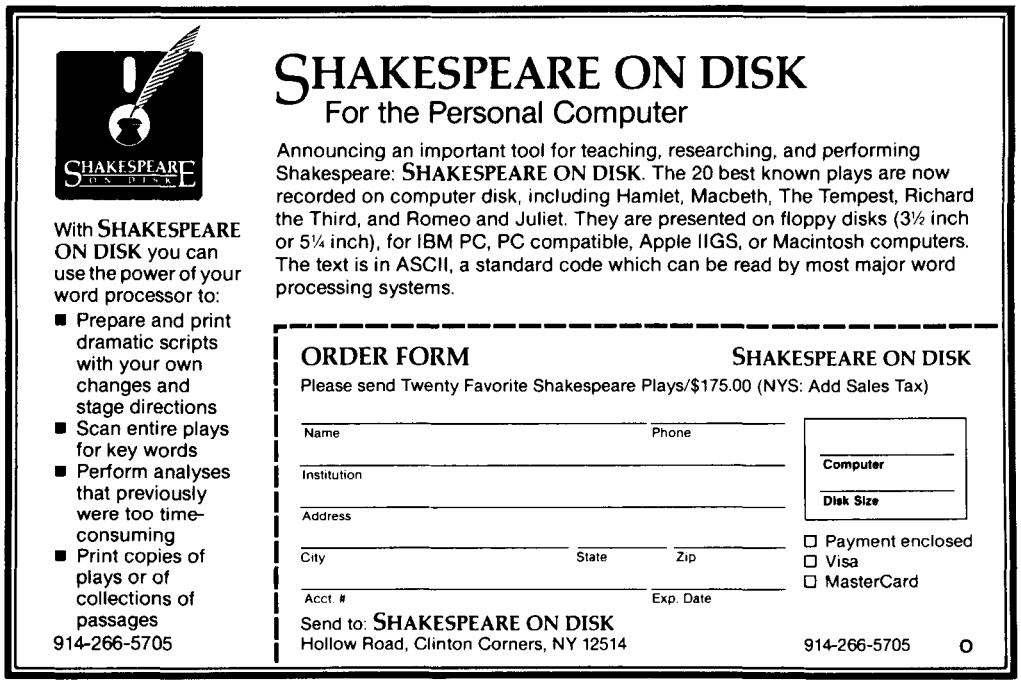
O'Connor, like Nietzsche, saw that the framework by which such solutions could gain meaning was no longer in place. Under these circumstances, to palliate humanity's ills with religious dogma might actually worsen the disease. Humanity's fascination with evil, its need, in Nietzsche's words, "to will Nothingness rather than nothing at all," was a sign of moral capacity, similar to Hazel Motes's inability to believe nothing. It was a first, if grossly inadequate step toward health (in Nietzsche's vocabulary) and redemption (in O'Connor's).

Flannery O'Connor, who was in her early twenties when the facts about Hitler's death camps became widely known, had "the advantage" over Nietzsche of knowing the sickness in its most virulent form. For O'Connor, only an amorality that severed mind and heart—an amorality that effectively *normalized* sadism and cruelty by transforming reason into calculated madness and emotion into mindless hysteria—could account for the Holocaust. O'Connor believed that the forces behind such normalization were a feature of modern life in general. Her work is best understood as an effort to combat these forces by shocking people into a recognition of the moral basis of reality. Although she wrote little (this single volume includes most of her output), what she did write is extraordinarily focused and powerful. It touches a nerve that non-religious readers, quite as much as religious ones, have found sensitive. She would have been pleased to learn that her work had rubbed so many readers raw.



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The Dead Sea Scrolls—An Exchange

After forty-one years of being involved in the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and its implications, I feel impelled to comment on Norman Golb's article in the Spring 1989 SCHOLAR, the very subtitle of which is questionable ("The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Perspective"). The basic idea presented here was probably considered by most early scholars, but abandoned in the light of the accumulating evidence, during 1949–1958.

To say, as he does in his first paragraph, that manuscripts "uncovered in Wadi Muraba'at and near En-Gedi . . . (were) of the same character as those found at Qumran" is ambiguous, to say the least. It is followed by an error in the date of the fall of Masada, which was later determined to be 74 A.D. (also pp. 186 and 199). Numerous other errors appear to confuse the informed reader. For instance, he says that Dr. Sukenik first suggested that the scrolls were Essene (p. 179), but it was Ibrahim Sowmy who started that idea among the Syrians in July 1947. They passed it along to Dr. Sukenik, when Anton Kiraz showed their scrolls to him on February 2, 1948. On page 180 he mentions "more than seventy" fragments and scrolls from that cave. On that same page he mentions "Apocryphal writings," which should be "Pseudepigraphic." On page 184 he has the Bedouins exploring caves "south of the settlement," which should be "west," where caves 4, 5, and 6 were found. Two lines further down he mentions "one meter beneath the surface," which makes no sense to one who knows the nature of Cave 4. In the next paragraph he mentions "horoscopes," but only one has been reported from Cave 4 so far.

More important, however, are the flaws in the arguments he uses for his thesis which focuses on Jerusalem as the original source of the Qumran documents. He apparently has not asked why the first three scrolls found by the shepherd boy (probably in late January of 1947) were found together in that jar in the back of Cave 1, yet had come from ca. 100, 75, and 25 B.C.E. Each shows signs of being a special scroll, as various features reveal, each pointing to the founder of a special kind of community of Jews. In the light of Golb's thesis, I hope soon to enlarge on this matter since it has been ignored by scholars. The very nature of Cave 4, cut by hand from the cliff just west of the main center, with its special balcony and depressions for lamps in its walls, and its internal stairway down to a lower level from which the largest collection of manuscript remains was recovered, part of them by archaeologists—these indications alone speak of something special, not related to a "fortress," as Golb calls Khirbet Qumran (p. 205)!

Would a fortress have a large area for making pottery, and a complex of large and small cisterns to supply water for such an activity, as well as others which point to a special kind of community, like the northwest one with clear indications of use for ceremonial purposes? Nor were there found any evidences of sleeping quarters inside the walls of the site. In fact, some forty caves were found in the nearby cliffs to contain pottery made at the site and apparently used by members of the community. Would a large meeting room, with an adjacent room in which were found a thousand service dishes suggesting a community of up to two hundred people dining and meeting there, be part of a fortress? Also, would a cemetery of over 1,000 identical, austere graves be adjacent to a fortress? Besides, no military hardware of any kind has appeared in the levels of occupation by this special community, except that used by the Romans to destroy the site.

These archaeological differences can be checked right at Kh. Qumran by noting that the bottom level of the site *was* a kind of look-out station that was destroyed in the sixth century B.C.E., and then built upon by some different type of community four centuries later. Then, for two hundred years, three clearly defined levels (Ia, Ib, and II) of a different type of community appear, with such unique features never seen before in the Middle East. But this special community was clearly destroyed by the Romans in the spring of 68 A.D. and part of it reused as a Roman fortress for a few years, then again used briefly during the Bar Kokhba revolt against Rome. These archeological differences cannot be ignored in analyzing the history of that site.

No direct connection of this center with the Wadi Muraba'at and En-Gedi caves was made in 1952, since their contents clearly related to the Bar Kokhba revolt of 132–135 A.D., which followed all the evidence at Qumran at that time, and they were far away. They only confirmed that Jews sought

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refuge in remote desert areas during periods of conflict or for other reasons.

Masada, of course, revealed a special period of persecution related to well-known historical events that followed closely on the three periods of unique Qumran activities. Golb's claim that the members of the community *fought against the Romans* is not substantiated by the evidence; for the men of Qumran were pacifists as the manuscript evidence shows, despite the War Scroll's description of a special kind of expected, but imaginary, religious war. The very presence of this scroll from Cave 1 suggests a special kind of Jewish thought quite distinct from the militant Zealots who fled to Masada. That a few members of the Community, at the onset of the Roman approach to Qumran, should have decided to flee south to join the revolt, is not surprising. Thus a few Qumran manuscripts could have found their way to Masada to join a few others brought from Jerusalem. Both groups were deeply religious, not unlike some parties of Jews in Israel today. Since the Divine intervention the men of Qumran would most likely have fled north to the Decapolis, just as the Jewish Christians of Jerusalem did in 70 A.D., when the Romans approached their holy city.

Another point that must be considered is the elaborate farm center developed two miles south at 'Ain Feshkha, for its relation to Khirbet Qumran has been clearly established. Again, that argues against the main site having been a "fortress," in my judgment, for it suggests a community of another type nearby.

To me, one of the strongest arguments against Golb's theory is the fact that at least four seriously damaged manuscripts were found in Cave 1 during 1947 and 1948. The second Isaiah scroll, which Dr. Sukenik secured from Faidi Salahi (1QIs^{b}) on December 22, 1947, showed clear signs of severe abuse, for it looked like it had been twisted with the intention of trying to damage it, and surely no member of the Qumran Community would have done such a thing. It must have been done by the Romans, who were known to desecrate sacred books of the Jews. An even more drastic case of such desecration was applied to a bundle of fragments secured by the Metropolitan's A. Y. Samuel during the fall of 1948. He handed them to me on February 4, 1949, when I met him in West New York, New Jersey. The main part was a matted mass of nine layers of fragments lying on top of each other, with several other related fragments in the metal box in which he carried them. The evidence was quite clear that three manuscripts had been torn and then trampled underfoot to put them in the shape I first saw them after their nineteen hundred years in the cave.

Yale University provided me a laboratory for the delicate task of analyzing the many pieces and the matted mass, which I photographed at every step. The top five layers made up parts of two columns of a scroll of Prayers (1QPrayers) with three sizeable pieces added from the box, the main part of which provided portions of a "Prayer for the Day of Atonement." The next two layers produced a scroll of Daniel (1QDan^{b}) with parts of chapter 3, and the bottom two layers produced a folded fragment of another scroll of Daniel (1QDan^{a}) with the latest of all scripts found at Qumran.

After much pondering, I have concluded that the condition of these pieces could only be accounted for on the basis that these manuscripts were in current use *in the Qumran center* at the time of the attack of the Romans on Qumran in 68 A.D. The same would apply to the Isaiah B Scroll. The Romans would not, of course, have put these desecrated scrolls in the cave, half a mile north of Khirbet Qumran; but some member of the Community, seeing the desecration, must have found a way to gather them together and give them a hasty burial in the cave. Thus there is a strong argument against Qumran having been a "fortress," if these scrolls were in the center at the time of the Roman attack.

Other manuscripts found in Cave 1 might have been treated in a similar way, had scholars been able to see them first. This evidence points also to the fact that Cave 1 was a kind of Genizah and further argues against Qumran having been a "fortress" at the time of its destruction by the Romans.

Admittedly the Cave 3 Copper Scroll (3Q Treasures) raises a major unsolved problem, which has apparently sparked Golb's theory. He seems not to have considered, however, the location of that scroll at the entrance to that cave, which may be telling us something. The fifty-nine tiny scroll fragments, found deeper in that cave, provide no adequate information. Only four pieces have sufficient text to identify their contents. But the pottery found with the scroll fragments would argue that they are Qumranian. The Copper Scroll, however, could have been deposited there after the men of Qumran had fled in 68 A.D. Besides, the confusion of that period from 68–70 A.D., when Jerusalem fell to the Romans, needs to be considered.

The tone of Dr. Golb's article suggests that he is distressed by the lack of scholarly attention to his theory. I hope he does not become another Solomon Zeitlin, whose insistence upon a medieval dating for all the scrolls, despite the accumulating evidence, harassed the world of biblical scholarship for so many years.

I hope my response to Dr. Golb's article will get more scholars to look more carefully *at all the evidence* available for this unique story in biblical history.

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NORMAN GOLB REPLIES:

John Trever's letter is only a further illustration of the difficulty that champions of the traditional interpretation now find themselves in. He first attempts to belittle my scholarship and call its accuracy into doubt; then offers an explanation of the archaeology of Qumran and the manuscripts yet more surprising than any I have seen in print to date; then hints that he has theories and ideas which make the old hypothesis absolutely believable, without however saying what they are; and finally, having refrained from dealing with most of the central points contained in my article, resorts to comparing me with a deceased scholar whose material ideas on Qumran origins have no point of intersection with my own.

Mr. Trever begins by stating that the subtitle of my article ("A New Perspective") is questionable, the reason being that the "basic idea presented here was probably considered by most early scholars, but abandoned, . . . " If by "the basic idea" Mr. Trever means the hypothesis of Jerusalem origin of the scrolls, I can find no evidence to support his claim. The hypothesis holds that the Dead Sea scrolls found near Khirbet Qumran are part of a yet larger number of manuscripts from various libraries in Jerusalem that were stored in many hiding places in the Judaean wilderness prior to or during the siege of 70 A.D. The earliest documented forerunner to it is the theory of K. H. Rengstorf published initially in 1960, to the effect that the scrolls all came from the Temple and that Qumran was a desert outpost of the Jerusalem priesthood. On the other hand, the view that the Copper Scroll contained an inventory of Temple treasures was first formulated, on separate occasions, by Chaim Rabin and K. G. Kuhn in 1956, before full publication of this scroll; but there is no indication that they or others applied their view of this text to the other evidence emerging during the 1950s and 1960s. If Trever's suggestion is true that most early scholars formulated the hypothesis of Jerusalem origin long before I did, and before the crucial Masada discoveries and full publication of the Copper Scroll in the early sixties, they must have been veritable wizards; and if in addition, as he proposes, they also abandoned this hypothesis "in the light of the accumulating evidence, during 1949–1958," then they must have been wizards who did not believe in their own visions. Trever offers no proof, unfortunately, for his assertion, which strikes me as both unfair and in the realm of wishful thinking.

Following upon this effort, Trever presents seven criticisms intended to encourage doubts about my scholarship. He first characterizes as "ambiguous" the statement he attributes to me that manuscripts "uncovered in Wadi Muraba'at and near En-Gedi . . . [were] of the same character as those found at Qumran." My statement, however (p. 177), was that "the discoveries included many more Hebrew manuscripts found in the Qumran caves between 1949 and 1956, texts of the second century A.D. uncovered in Wadi Muraba'at and near En-Gedi (1951–55, 1960–61), and still other manuscripts, of the same character as those found at Qumran, which were discovered between 1963 and 1965 at Masada. . . ."

Trever has omitted from his quotation precisely those words modified by the phrase "of the same character as those found at Qumran." While a possible ambiguity lurks in the structure of the sentence if read without its punctuation or benefit of the rest of the article, my discussion on pages 193–195, describing the significant differences between the autograph manuscripts of Muraba'at and En-Gedi and the scribal literary texts of Qumran, can leave no doubt in the mind of any careful reader as to the sense of the above statement. The fact that Trever not only misquotes me but also fails to deal with the problem of lack of either documentary or literary autographs at Qumran—forming perhaps the most crucial single piece of evidence against the Qumran-Essene theory—illustrates painfully the unwillingness of scholars once engaged in formulating that theory to come to grips with this problem.

Trever follows this misreading by attributing to me "an error in the date of the fall of Masada." I did not, however, discuss the date of the fall of Masada, but in each of the places cited by him, described—correctly—the years 70–73 as those in which the Jews held out against the Romans at that site. Josephus does not tell us the precise date of its fall, and although one interpretation holds that it did not take place until 74 A.D., that point of controversy is not germane to the issue addressed in the article—which is the discovery of Hebrew manuscripts at Masada having the same characteristics as those found earlier at Qumran. I stated in my article that traditional Qumranologists refrain from discussing whether any of these Masada manuscripts may have come from Jerusalem—the city from which most of the Masada refugees had fled. Trever now acknowledges that "a few" of the manuscripts found at Masada may have come from Jerusalem, and this, despite his creation of an irrelevant issue, is the Qumranological equivalent of a great leap forward. (Trever's assertion that Christians and Essenes fled to the cities of the Decapolis when Jerusalem fell reveals much about the nature of his interest in the scrolls, but to the best of my knowledge is supported by no historical testimony.)

To these faux pas Trever then adds the assertion that it was not Professor Sukenik who first formulated the hypothesis of Essene origins of the scrolls (see my article, p. 179f.), but other figures who, he claims, passed this idea along to Sukenik; and he states that I am in error in not reporting this claim. Sukenik, on the other hand, writes in his first book

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on the scrolls, *Megillot genuzot* (Jerusalem, 1948), page 16: "I incline to hypothesize that this cache of manuscripts belonged originally to the sect of the Essenes"—and says nothing of this idea having originated among others. I have never found compelling proof that would cast doubt on the statement of Sukenik, who was a scholar of integrity. Perhaps there is correspondence of Mr. Sowmy's or the Syrian priests, written prior to the meeting with Sukenik, that would cast further light on the subject and prove the claim that Trever champions, and that, in my perception, is similar in character to his suggestion that scholars in the early years of Qumran investigation considered and abandoned the hypothesis of Jerusalem origin long before I had formulated it.

Trever then states that not 70 but 990 "total fragments" of scrolls were found in Cave 1; whereas my description on page 180 of the article was of the fragmentary scrolls considered as entities, not of the individual small pieces of these fragments to which Trever refers by his expression "total fragments." These texts were published in 1988 (D. Barthélemy, J. R. Milik et al., *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* I, Clarendon Press, Oxford), and the reader may be assured that there are just over seventy fragmentary scrolls published there. Their number is listed in the table of contents, while there are photographs at the end of the book showing all of the minute pieces of parchment and papyrus constituting what is left of these scrolls. Since I state that these texts were published when they were, and the publication is surely known to Trever, his criticism is obviously misleading.

Trever would also want the reader to believe that "only one" horoscope was found in Cave 4—ergo that I was not accurate in speaking of them in the plural; whereas in point of fact horoscopes (plural) from Cave 4 were described as long ago as 1957 (J. T. Milik, *Dix ans de découverte dans le désert de Juda*, Paris 1957, pp. 38, 78–79), and have since been partly published.

Thereafter, Trever corrects my "Apocryphal" to "Pseudepigraphic," but as THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR is not an official journal of the Protestant church, which espouses this term in favor of the other, neither I nor the editors were under any obligation to use it. The term *Apocryphal* is quite universally understood, and Trever's criticism is nothing more than additional dust in the eye of readers.

Trever writes that I have "the Bedouins exploring caves 'south of the settlement,' which should be 'west,' where caves 4, 5, and 6 were found." The marl terrace where these caves are located is situated southwestward of Khirbet Qumran, and the position of these particular caves is much more toward the south than toward the west of Qumran (as shown, for example, in Plate XL of Père de Vaux's *L'Archéologie et les manuscrits de la Mer Morte*, London, 1961).

Trever completes the catalog of his errors by stating that my description of the Cave 4 manuscripts as being found "one meter beneath the surface" "makes no sense to one who knows the nature of Cave 4." He may be assured that, although not one of the members of the original exploration team, I have indeed examined the Qumran site, been within Cave 4, studied the literature on the subject, and stand by my description—which is that the *bedouin* first located a huge number of manuscripts "*approximately* one meter beneath the surface," and that this was followed by the arrival of the archaeologists, who found additional manuscripts in that cave. Within the context of the essay, there was neither need nor space to describe details of the construction of either this or the other caves.

In brief, all of these claims of Trever's are either misleading or totally spurious. Trever apparently believes, nevertheless, that by his efforts to cast doubt on my scholarship the reader will be in a better position to accept the remarkable defense of the Qumran site as a habitation of Essenes, which follows in his letter. To this I respond that, even were his criticisms less flimsy than they are, it would in no way follow that the elements of his defense add up to a believable statement. His basic method (which he employs, however, yet more zealously than have past scholars) has been first to accept the theory of Essene origins of the scrolls as a fact, on the basis of comparison of the Manual of Discipline with Josephus' description of the Essenes and the statement of Pliny that Essenes lived above En-Gedi—and then to try to identify features of the Qumran site that might be made to conform to that theory. Some features of the site can be used quite satisfactorily for argumentation of this kind, although minus the Qumran-Essene hypothesis, other equally valid or superior explanations of those same features at once emerge. Thus Trever insists that the thousand quite uniform graves located in a cemetery (more precisely, two cemeteries adjacent to each other) to the south of the site argue against Khirbet Qumran having been a fortress and in favor of the belief that Essenes were living there and in the vicinity for at least two hundred years. As mentioned in my article, however, only forty-three of those thousand graves were excavated, and the world knows what happened when some of them—contrary to what was expected on the basis of Pliny's description—were found to contain the skeletons of women: Not only did a special exegesis of the nature of Qumran Essenism follow (cf. my article, pp. 188–189), but also the excavation of all the remaining 950-plus graves was discontinued. No stratification of the grave sites has ever been demonstrated. From the contents of those graves that were explored and from the uniform layout of all the graves together, and minus the Qumran-Essene identification, the cemetery appears much more likely to have been that of victims of the war

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with Rome, including those who perished when the Qumran site was attacked as well as those once living in the nearby area of Judaea—parts of which, in those days, were fertile farmland regions quite heavily populated. There is today no good reason to accept the special explanation offered by Trever.

Other such ex post facto attributions are those attaching themselves to the cisterns, the dining area, and the pottery workshop located within Khirbet Qumran. It is obvious that inhabitants of an ancient military settlement had at least as much need for water, dining facilities, and food storage as did Essenes; whereas no ancient source tells us, for example, that Essene sectarians had a special skill in the manufacture of jugs. If in addition the caves adjacent to Khirbet Qumran show signs of ancient habitation, this does not at all imply that Essenes inhabited them. The internal construction or layout of individual caves only takes on a special meaning if one assents in advance to the notion that the people living at Qumran were sectarians who hid manuscripts of their own there; but if the manuscripts were brought to the Judaean wilderness from Jerusalem and hidden away with the aid of local inhabitants, the reason for the hiding of so many manuscripts in any particular cave is simply that it was a convenient place to store them. Archaeology has so far offered no proof whatever that either the settlement or nearby caves were inhabited by celibate Essenes such as those described by Pliny or by any other distinct body of sectarians.

Trever, however, tries to induce the reader to think otherwise, and to do this he must put the word *fortress* in quotation marks and deny altogether the military nature of the Qumran establishment. He asserts that "the men of Qumran were pacifists" and that the main site was indeed not a fortress—and these assertions fly in the face of the evidence described in detail by Père de Vaux, the excavator of the site. Besides describing the "massive two-story tower" (R. de Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, London, 1973, p. 6) and other military features noted in my article—features that Trever does not discuss—de Vaux asserts that the builders of the site "were especially preoccupied with considerations of defense" (ibid.). He writes that "the tower . . . fortified by its ramp of stones, offered a stouter resistance" to the Roman attackers (ibid., p. 36). Who then was doing the resisting, in Trever's opinion? De Vaux (ibid.) describes evidence of a "violent destruction of the site, including the collapse of ceilings and superstructures and the burning of the roofs of buildings, stating that they "were reduced to ruins by a military action" and, on the basis of specific evidence, that the destruction took place "at the hands of Roman soldiers" (p. 41). F. M. Cross, a member of the original manuscript team, also describes this attack on Khirbet Qumran: "The community buildings . . . were destroyed under armed attack during the Jewish Revolt. The walls . . . are mined through; the building ruins were sealed in layers of ash from a great conflagration; and in the blackened debris of the main fortification are the telltale iron arrowheads used by the Roman legionaries." (F. M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran and the Essenes*, New York, 1958, p. 45). Had the Romans not met with heavy, armed resistance at the site—acknowledged to be a fortress by the excavators themselves—they would surely not have gone to the extreme of virtually destroying it; for, as de Vaux shows (op. cit., p. 42ff.), upon its subjugation it was immediately occupied by Roman troops who used it as a fortress once again. The strategic position of Qumran is described carefully by de Vaux: "From the plateau . . . the view extends over the whole of the western shore (of the Dead Sea) from the mouth of the Jordan to Ras Feshkha and over the whole northern half of the sea" (R. de Vaux, *L'Archéologie et les manuscrits de la Mer Morte*, London, 1961, p. 33; my translation). All this is a far cry from Trever's description. It is simply against the evidence, and patently untrue, that the Qumran site first became a fortress upon occupation by the Romans, and Trever's speculations about some damaged manuscripts found in one of the Qumran caves (see below) change nothing. If Ain Feshkha, to the south of Qumran, was a farming center, Qumran was not; and its identification as a fortress, quite obvious from the remains themselves, is not contravened—as Trever claims—but supported by its presence near one or more such farming communities, in the manner of innumerable forts in Roman Palestine and elsewhere.

In order to support the old hypothesis, Trever states that a cistern in the northwestern quadrant of the settlement contains "clear indications of use for ceremonial purposes," but does not tell the reader what these indications are. Père de Vaux describes this cistern (along with the many others located at Qumran) and states that it and one other may show signs of having been used for bathing purposes, but he is careful to emphasize that archaeological analysis in itself "has not the power to say if the baths in question had a ritual character" (ibid., p. 99, my translation). The great majority of cisterns were quite obviously installed in the site to enable the inhabitants to withstand a siege, but they were surely entitled as well to bathe occasionally and even to do so in consonance with the biblical laws, which not only Essenes but many Palestinian Jews of that period observed. Here again Trever has been led by the hypothesis to make an undemonstrable claim about the site.

Trever states that three scrolls found in a single jar in the back of Cave 1 date from "ca. 100, 75, and 25 B.C.E.," that each of these "shows signs of being a special scroll," and that each points "to the founder of a special kind of community of Jews"—and these constitute perhaps the most baffling of the

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assertions contained in his letter. As stated in my article, two bedouin originally found certain intact scrolls in Cave 1. What first met their eyes when they entered the cave were eight large jars, all but one of which proved to be empty. According to G. L. Harding's account (D. Barthélemy et al., *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* I, Oxford, 1955, p. 5), the shepherds "drew forth one large leather roll and two smaller ones" from that jar. (Four other intact scrolls were taken from the cave a few months later, apparently by monks of St. Mark's Monastery in Jerusalem who had been alerted by bedouin.) Harding writes that the bedouin displayed their booty (i.e., the three scrolls found in the jar) to friends and relatives. He states: "A vivid account I was given by one relative of how the large scroll, when unrolled, reached from one end of the tent to the other seems to identify it as the Isaiah scroll. From descriptions of the others, *it seems possible* (italics mine) they were the Manual of Discipline and the Habakkuk Commentary."—If we now compare this statement (and it must be emphasized that there are no further indications extant enabling one to determine which three of the seven original scrolls were in fact found in that jar) with that of Trever, we see that the hesitancy accompanying Harding's statement is replaced by certitude on the part of Trever. He now knows that the three scrolls were written in or near certain particular years, that each shows signs of being a scroll of particular importance, and that each of them points to the founder of a special kind of Jewish community. But this is all fantasy. Trever of course refrains from acknowledging that there is a difference between scribal copies of texts and authors' originals, or that the lack of authors' originals at Qumran constitutes a problem for the traditional hypothesis; and it is hardly a sign of professional competence to claim to know almost the precise years when any of the seven undated scrolls of Qumran cave 1 were copied. On the other hand, fixing the actual date of composition of the lost originals of the five non-biblical scrolls of that cave is a problem beset with virtually insurmountable difficulties, at least in the present state of our knowledge. Likewise, though Trever does not explicitly say if the three scrolls he has in mind are those mentioned by Hardy, it is important to note that neither the Isaiah scroll nor the Manual of Discipline contains any reference whatsoever to the founder of a sect; the massive importance Trever attributes to these three scrolls, moreover, contrasts with the fact that they form only a tiny minority among the hundreds of non-biblical texts found in the Qumran caves. Trever's scheme: three scrolls showing certain unnamed signs of special importance, dated in a neat forward progression, each describing the founder of a special religious community, and all found together in a single jar within the very first Qumran cave discovered, is reminiscent not of scholarly inquiry but of the mysterious reasoning imputed to Hermes Trismegistus, and constitutes a notable example of the extremes to which traditional Qumran scholarship is driven in the effort to defend its position.

Not only does Trever promise to enlarge in the future on his ideas, and even, as I learn with some uneasiness, to make use of my hypothesis in expounding them, but he also claims to know how certain damaged manuscript fragments found in Cave 1 were actually mutilated. He states that the condition of the matted mass of fragments, for whose delicate task of analysis Yale University provided him with a laboratory, allowed him to draw only one conclusion—that they were being used at Qumran itself when it was attacked. He states that "the evidence was quite clear that three manuscripts had been torn and then trampled underfoot." Also, he states, the second Isaiah Scroll "showed clear signs of severe abuse, for it looked like it had been twisted with the intention of damaging it," and he insists that this damage was caused by Romans at Qumran before the texts were hidden. These claims he calls one of the most serious arguments against my hypothesis. Now to the best of my knowledge, Trever has never published photographs showing either foot or hand imprints on these manuscripts, or evidence that it was at Qumran that they were actually either used or damaged. From their condition one cannot divine, unless perhaps by laboratory procedures unique in the annals of science, whether they were torn by beasts or men, and, if by the latter, whether by Jews, Romans, or others. Josephus in his Jewish War describes at length the internecine strife among Jewish factions in Jerusalem in the months before the Roman siege, and the severe damage it caused to the Jerusalem archives and other buildings in the city. Assuming that the damage to these manuscripts was man-made, the cause is far more likely to have been this civil warfare. Trever's explanation requires one to join him in believing that after the Romans who vanquished Qumran putatively damaged these scrolls, one or more defeated Essenes then stealthily returned to the damaged settlement while the Romans were there, searched for and found, or else spontaneously discovered, these damaged scrolls, spirited them out of the site, and successfully hid them a few kilometers to the north in a cave that was by this time well within territory held by their enemies. All of this, more nearly resembling the plot of a possible Essene opera or Bible movie than a genuine historical idea, can hardly be called a serious argument against my hypothesis.

Apparently heedless of accumulating evidence, Trever also claims that the Copper Scroll "could have been deposited" in Cave 3 after the inhabitants of Qumran had fled. By so doing, he resurrects an old argument (see my article, p. 196) totally discredited by recent archaeological investigations (see particularly B. Pixner in *Revue de Qumran* XI,

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1983, pp. 323–366) that have determined that the Copper Scroll could indeed not have been deposited in Cave 3 later than the other manuscripts.

Having, finally, adduced not a single piece of evidence that cogently refutes the hypothesis of Jerusalem origin or that advances in any way the logic underlying the Qumran-Essene theory, Trever concludes his letter with an offensive comparison designed to portray me, by implication, as having "harassed the world of biblical scholarship." Biblical scholarship? While several scholars of the Bible (plus a few archaeologists) were the first to study the scrolls, this does not necessarily mean that they were the most qualified such scholars to engage in this work, and—as the non-publication of so many of the texts after forty years now shows—it is in fact questionable whether biblical scholars to begin with should have been put in charge of the edition of the non-biblical scrolls. It is indeed regrettable that Qumran studies as a whole have been dominated by biblical scholars rather than by historians and paleographers. Members of the original team continue to guard closely many of the still unpublished fragments, or to pass them on to their students; thus, those texts that do appear are accompanied by commentaries that heedlessly seek to justify the old hypothesis, and it is those responsible for these current writings, rather than I, who refrain from considering all the evidence. The idea mirrored in Trever's words is simply that the small world, or rather the clique of scholars, still exercising control over the publication of the Qumran scrolls, and in which he claims membership, is unhappy to see its common ideas challenged. If Trever feels "harassed" by my critique of the doctrine he sustains, this is simply one more sign that he needs to do, first, his homework, and then some solid thinking; the two theories of Qumran origins presently before the public will have to stand on the merits of the evidence and of the reasoning advanced to explain them. As of now, the problems inhering in the standard hypothesis continue to fester; the hypothesis of Jerusalem origin has until now been refuted, in whole or in part, by no one; and I renew my invitation to colleagues to proceed with the debate.

P. S. There was an unfortunate *lapsus calami* in my article: the author of *False Prophets* is not, of course, Hans but Alexander Kohn.

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This conference, sponsored by the Department of History and the Walter P. Reuther Library at Wayne State University, will reflect the best of recent scholarship in diverse areas of labor history. On the program are sessions dealing with nineteenth- and twentieth-century labor history, American, Canadian, European, and South American labor history, along with sessions on labor songs and labor theater, and other featured speakers and events. For further information, contact: Philip P. Mason, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan 48202.

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Casper College invites applications for the sixth annual lecture in the Margaret Demorest Lectures in the Humanities to be held in Casper, Wyoming, in January 1991. The honorarium is $1,000. The focus of the 1991 series will be language. The Demorest Lecturer will present a keynote speech around which Casper College will organize a two-day humanities festival. By January 31, 1990, applicants should submit vita, a 500-word proposal, a sample bibliography, and three references to: Shirley Jacob, Chairperson, The Margaret Demorest Lecture Series, Casper College, 125 College Drive, Casper, Wyoming 82601

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International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations

Papers are invited for the nineteenth annual meeting of this society, which will be held on May 24–27, 1990, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The "Comparative Civilizational Perspective" that the Society advocates is designed to shed new light either on the processes, structures and texts of single civilizations or on the problems of interpreting and comparing civilizations with methods from both the humanities and the social sciences. The deadline for submitting abstracts is November 15, 1989. For information, write to: Professor Midori Rynn, 1990 ISCSC Meeting, Department of Sociology, University of Scranton, Scranton, Pennsylvania 18510

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The Reader Replies . . . . . .

Paul Kennedy's Rise and Fall

Leave it to a conservative journal to sic an Edward N. Luttwak on Paul Kennedy's *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Spring 1989). Obsessed all his life with the Soviet military threat, Luttwak in essence reviews only the sections of Kennedy's book dealing with the cold war and denounces the entire book on the basis of his visceral disagreement with those sections. The reviewer is incensed at Kennedy's "algebra" for supposedly equating the consecutive fading of the great powers since 1500 with the costs of militarism. A less tendentious reading of Kennedy's history makes it clear that his etiology of national decline is more balanced and complex than Luttwak allows. Kennedy's reasons for decline include a host of "civilian" factors that both affect and are enhanced by the underlying occasions of imperial pursuit and military improvidence.

Luttwak goes to the opposite of Kennedy's alleged extreme and absolves the "national defense account" of any blame for shifts of power and influence. He tries to "dispose of" Kennedy's argument on the debilitating effect of military commitment by pointing out that American spending on national defense since the Vietnam War has comprised a smaller percentage of the gross national product and public expenditure than during the economically more favorable 1951–1974 period, even if the years of the Reagan rearmament alone are compared. Like so many advocates of permanent armament, Luttwak seems to have no sense of the cumulative impact of high defense spending over several decades. Just as a wastrel will be less solvent after squandering his wealth for a long time than a short time, a state will find itself in more dire straits as it prolongs its profligacy. The long-term effect of defense spending in the United States is reflected today in a degree of capital depletion and infrastructural deprivation not yet realized a quarter of a century ago, regardless of the comparative shares of defense in national income.

Furthermore, gross national product is a poor touchstone for evaluating the burden of defense. As Luttwak himself admits, national product contains many elements that do not truly represent a society's well-being. Defense outlays should be compared with more relevant economic categories, such as capital investment and increment to wealth. In the ranks of such categories national defense assumes more ominous dimensions. The drain of defense is especially heavy on the scarce generative factors so vital to economic growth, including state-of-the-art equipment, rare metals, scientific research, and professional skills.

Even Luttwak acknowledges the "Marxist" proposition that political and cultural decline follows in the wake of a downward economic curve. Accordingly, he notes that the shrinking supply of investment capital in the United States is a prime cause of the American downslide. But he attributes the capital shortage to all spending on consumption, not military spending. In expatiating on this point, he betrays a limited understanding of economics. All societies consume the bulk of their income, primarily on the products needed for survival and, secondarily, on those reflecting national culture and habits. Savings and subsequent capital accumulation are the amount of national product left over after consumption. It is against this very surplus that American defense has been making its stiff exactions year after year, without respite, since the Korean War. Luttwak has not demonstrated whatsoever that the folly of "imperial overstretch" is imaginary and that Kennedy's thesis is therefore bereft of "historical scholarship."

LOUVAN E. NOLTING
Lewes, Delaware

EDWARD LUTTWAK replies: The bottom line, as Mr. Nolting and I both agree, is the savings residual of the national product. He says that too much of that is allocated to the national defense; I say that it is too little to begin with—a fraction of European and Japanese savings rates. The question to be answered is this: What would have done greater harm over the last four decades of East-West confrontation, a weaker national defense or the feeble restrictions on consumption that we have suffered? Considering the contents of attics and basements and landfills from coast to coast, I would have thought that frivolous consumption could have been restricted even more—or is profligacy now integral to the national culture?

What's Wrong with Babel?

In his article "What's Wrong with Babel?" (Winter 1989), Leon Kass writes that the scriptures

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are silent on why God chose Abram. May I add some comments.

According to Joseph Campbell in "The Power of Myth," in most cultures the snake symbolizes the power of life. In Genesis 3, the serpent (i.e., instinct for self-preservation) prompted the woman to think that since the fruit appeared to fill their need for physical, aesthetic, and intellectual nourishment, God had forbidden them the fruit for his own selfish reasons. Because she no longer trusted God to provide for their needs, she took what she thought they needed.

After they ate the fruit, they did indeed acquire the knowledge of good and evil. They stood naked before God and each other, aware that by putting their own self-importance above God they had exposed their self-centeredness. Knowing that each was vulnerable, a potential victim of the overriding self-importance of the other, their innocent trustingness was shattered. In fear they covered themselves, just as we mask our innermost selves, and in shame denied responsibility by blaming each other, just as we try to justify our own self-centeredness.

Thus evil has its beginnings within ourselves when overriding concern for the importance of our own desires governs our behavior to the exclusion of concern for others, and so we take from (or impose on) others according to our desires without regard for others. The result is mutual distrust, leading to further acts of self-importance and the inevitable spread of alienation, evil, and despair.

Although what the woman gave was unwise because it was not hers to give and left her husband's true needs unfilled, she did give of the fruit to him, telling us that God created humans with the capacity to give and share—to act from other-concern as well as self-concern.

The fact that the story of the "Fall" follows the Genesis 2 description of the creation of our relational sexuality within the context of a bonding husband/wife relationship may be partly responsible for the sexual connotation sometimes imputed to the woman's act of giving in Genesis 3. The misinterpretation may also have arisen because the serpent symbol for the power of life was interpreted as generative sex and the later reference to Eve as the mother of all who live (Gen. 3:20) was taken as confirmation of the sexual interpretation of the act of giving.

Thus in contrast to prevailing interpretations, I suggest the story of the "Fall" reveals we were created in God's image with the capability to love and the freedom to choose to love or not to love, but needing God's guidance if we are to learn to avoid unloving choices that cause alienation, despair, and escalating evil and to learn to love wisely.

Genesis 3 set the stage for the revelation of the ten commandments that prohibit the most flagrant acts of self-importance (murder is the ultimate act of self-importance over another) and command us to preserve the loving relationships that can help us learn to set aside self-importance. These commandments, in turn, laid the groundwork for the revelation of Jesus and the greatest commandment to love God with whole heart and neighbor as thyself (rejecting self-importance and balancing self-concern and other-concern).

Adam and Eve rejected God's guidance because they lacked a firm belief in the one and only God who as their creator knew their needs, lacked trust in God's selfless concern for them, and lacked the willingness to set aside their own self-importance. As a result, self-importance governed and would continue to govern their choices. They were cast out to prevent them from using the power that the knowledge of good and evil could give them to perpetuate their own self-importance, thereby perpetuating alienation, despair, and evil.

I suggest that Shem and later Abram were chosen because, unlike Adam and Eve, they were ready to follow God. As Dr. Kass points out, Shem, the head of the lineage of Abram, gained a name for himself "not by pursuing it proudly, but by covering his father, Noah's nakedness," demonstrating his willingness to set aside self-importance in favor of concern for his father.

When Abram sent his son, Ishmael, away for Sarah's sake and did not refuse God the life of his son, Isaac, he demonstrated his belief in the one and only God who as the creator knew his innermost needs, his trust in God's selfless concern for his needs, and his willingness to set aside self-importance in favor of concern for Sarah and for God.

Judging by the evil and alienation prevalent throughout the diverse cultures of our world today, we are building our world around the same singularity of purpose in our commitment to self-importance that doomed the biblical Babel. We desperately need guidance, but, although we have rejected authoritarianism as the voice of the loving God, we cannot seem to discern the real voice of God. Perhaps because, like Adam and Eve, we are not ready.

MARILYN KRAMER
Lake Tomahawk, Wisconsin

John Crowe Ransom

I write about Cleanth Brooks's essay on John Crowe Ransom that appeared in the Spring 1989 issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. I am sure that Mr. Brooks knows more about Ransom than I, but I am appalled over his misquotation of Walter Savage Landor's quatrain on page 221 of his article. Mr. Brooks misquotes Landor as having written "I *fought* with none for none was worth my strife . . ."

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and uses this misquotation to derogate Landor as being arrogant and to defend Ransom as a person who rarely fought with anyone. Landor wrote "I *strove* with none for none was worth my strife. . . ." Striving is quite a different matter from fighting. I hope you will call this to Mr. Brooks's attention.

MRS. HERDIS C. SNYDER
Evansville, Indiana

CLEANTH BROOKS replies: My apologies for this mistake, and I thank Mrs. Snyder for pointing it out.

The Man in the Green Hat

In his delightful piece entitled "The Man in the Green Hat" (Summer 1989), Aristides asks, "What . . . drove the Mad Hatter mad, exactly?" I'm glad he asked. To answer, I quote from my little book *Medical Meanings: A Glossary of Word Origins*:

"*Mad as a hatter* is an expression used to describe a person more than slightly daft. It usually reminds one of Lewis Carroll's Mad Hatter, an amusing character encountered in the course of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, but the phrase was well known earlier. Its origin is disputed. Some say it began as "mad as an atter," the "atter" being an Anglo-Saxon word for adder, thus referring to the viper whose bite was thought to induce madness. The alternative explanation, medically more interesting, is that mercurous chloride was used in making felt for hats and that hatmakers or "hatters," inhaling the vapors, would eventually become victims of mercury poisoning. Among the symptoms of chronic mercury poisoning are tremors of the eyelids, lips, tongue, and fingers, due to cerebellar cortical atrophy."

WILLIAM S. HAUBRICH, M.D.
La Jolla, California

The Japanese-American Internment

I am a little puzzled by Eric Sundquist's assertion in his thoughtful and informative article on the events leading to the post–Pearl Harbor internment of Japanese-Americans (Autumn 1988) that the internment had the support of the American Civil Liberties Union and that there was "complicity of the Japanese American Citizens League and the American Civil Liberties Union in the repressive treatment of troublesome internees, many of whom had legitimate grievances and demands." This would be, if true, uncharacteristic of the ACLU. The ACLU itself claims that "the episode was a national tragedy . . . the worst single wholesale violation of civil rights of American citizens in our history. The strongest voices against evacuation and relocation came from the ACLU affiliates on the West Coast" (*ACLU Briefing Paper*, No. 1). I would be very interested to have Mr. Sundquist shed some light on this discrepancy.

MARK SUND
Chicago, Illinois

ERIC SUNDQUIST replies: Uncharacteristic perhaps, but nonetheless true. Mr. Sund addresses one of the more complex issues of the internment, to which I can respond only briefly.

The ACLU has indeed declared that the internment of Japanese Americans was "the worst single wholesale violation of civil rights of American citizens in our history." That position was stated, in fact, as early as 1943 (after the internment was completed, of course). But it is also the case that it was the Northern California office (NCACLU), and to a somewhat lesser extent the Southern California office, that took the vigorous initiative in fighting the evacuation order and supporting test cases in court. The national office, despite director Roger Baldwin's early opposition to Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, was internally divided and grew increasingly hostile to what it took to be the maverick efforts of the NCACLU, led by Ernest Besig and the recently engaged attorney Wayne Collins. Both the executive board of the ACLU (composed mostly of New Yorkers, many of them Roosevelt loyalists) and the national committee (made up of some seventy nationwide representatives) adopted resolutions providing support for the evacuation order and limiting the grounds on which the NCACLU could officially aid in pending evacuation court cases, such as those of Fred Korematsu and Gordon Hirabayashi. Even the NCACLU board and local membership, following the lead of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), initially voted against supporting court tests of the president's order. Despite his rather heroic efforts, over many years, on behalf of internees, Wayne Collins was often melodramatically extreme and consequently viewed with great skepticism by the national office. For example, in the amicus brief he wrote when Gordon Hirabayashi's case went before the Supreme Court, Collins compared Western Defense Commander General John DeWitt (the military figure technically responsible for the evacuation) to Attila the Hun and Adolf Hitler.

In contrast, the ACLU itself had issued public statements congratulating DeWitt for the "efficient manner" in which the evacuation was completed, and supporting Dillon Myer's policies in his role as director of the War Relocation Authority (WRA). As Peter Irons has written in *Justice at War*, one of the recent books discussed in my essay, the New York office tended to place "their hatred of the Axis

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above their civil liberties concern." And, as Richard Drinnon convincingly argues in *Keeper of Concentration Camps* (a book to which I took exception on other scores), there is substantial evidence of informal ties and, to a degree, coordinated efforts among Baldwin's ACLU, Myers's WRA, and Mike Masaoka's JACL, all of them variously opposed to the more radical activism of the NCACLU.

The Northern California office found itself virtually alone in attempts to redress internee grievances in the western camps or to aid Japanese Americans who resisted draft registration. Both the JACL and the national ACLU, not entirely without reason, urged compliance with draft registration and contended that aid to "disloyal" internees would undermine any public support for legal or economic aid to loyal" Japanese Americans. When Baldwin was asked in 1944 for assistance by a resister named Kiyoshi Okamoto, who was interned at Heart Mountain, Wyoming, he replied in a public letter that resisters had no *legal* rights and "must expect severe treatment," including several years of imprisonment. The JACL took the same position, as did most Nisei who accepted the registration and military service. Likewise, the national office gave virtually no support to Besig and Collins in their attempts to aid "renunciants" (those Nisei who felt they had been forced to renounce American citizenship by the clumsily handled loyalty screening that accompanied military registration) and the more militant internees grouped at Tule Lake, where illegal disciplinary measures were employed. From Besig's point of view, this made the national ACLU "defenders and justifiers of racism."

Needless to say, the story is a more complicated one than can be described here. The books by Irons and Drinnon, however, are excellent sources of information on the role in the internment of the ACLU and its California branches. No doubt today the ACLU would prefer to have taken from the beginning a more consistently noble stand in defense of Japanese Americans. But like others who would afterward regret their actions in support of the internment—including, for example, such civil rights advocates as Earl Warren and Carey McWilliams—the ACLU was largely bound by political allegiances, social policies, and legal decisions that placed Japanese Americans at great risk and virtually guaranteed their mistreatment by a nation at war.

Addendum

After my article "The Costs of the French Revolution" (Summer 1989) had gone to press, my attention was drawn, by Professor Albert O. Hirschman, to René Sédillot's *Le Coût de la Révolution française* (Paris, 1987), which covers, in greater detail, several of the topics dealt with there. Although the book is based on different sources and often gives different figures (for instance, the human losses are put at about 2,000,000), by a strange quirk of fate not only are the conclusions in broad agreement but the titles are identical. On the whole, however, it is more negative. This coincidence is perhaps less surprising in view of the fact that Sédillot is described on the blurb as "économiste de formation, historien de vocation," a label that fits exactly the present writer. All I can do is repeat the line in Ionesco's *La cantatrice chauve*: "Comme c'est curieux, comme c'est bizarre et quelle coincidence."

CHARLES ISSAWI

Erratum

I regret that I did not correct two errors in my typescript of the article "The Abbé Galiani: 'The Laughing Philosopher'" (Autumn 1988): On page 595, last paragraph in the left column, 1775–76 should be 1765–66; and on page 596, middle of the left column, [1770] should be [1769].

FRANCIS STEEGMULLER

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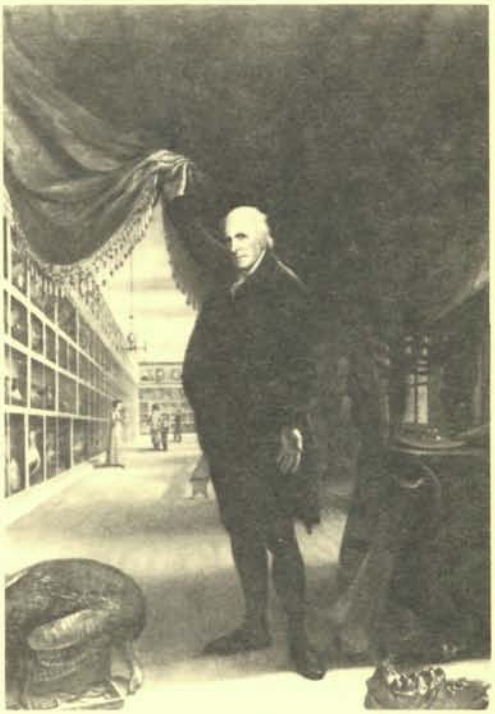

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